

NOVEMBER, 1923

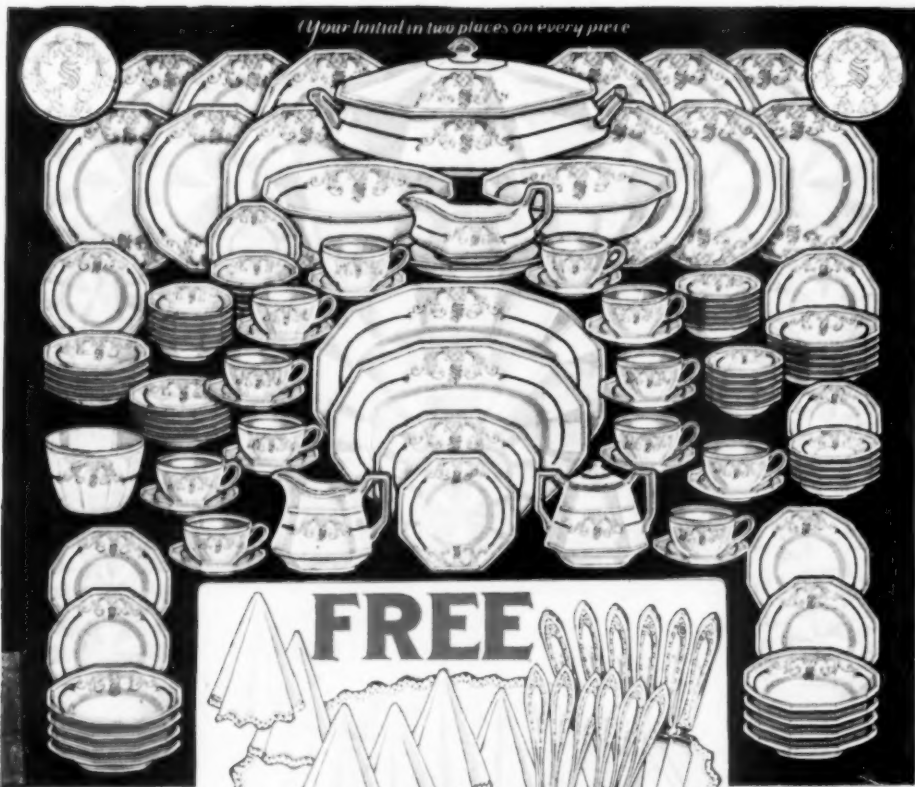
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# The SMART SET

Edited by  
George Jean Nathan  
and  
H.L. Mencken







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 1 Platter, 11 1/4 in.  
 1 Cereal Dish, 8 1/2 in.

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 1 Butter Plate, 6 inches  
 1 Deep Bowl, 9 1/4 inches  
 1 Oval Baker, 9 inches  
 1 Small Deep Bowl, 5 inches  
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 1 Sugar Bowl with cover (2 pieces)  
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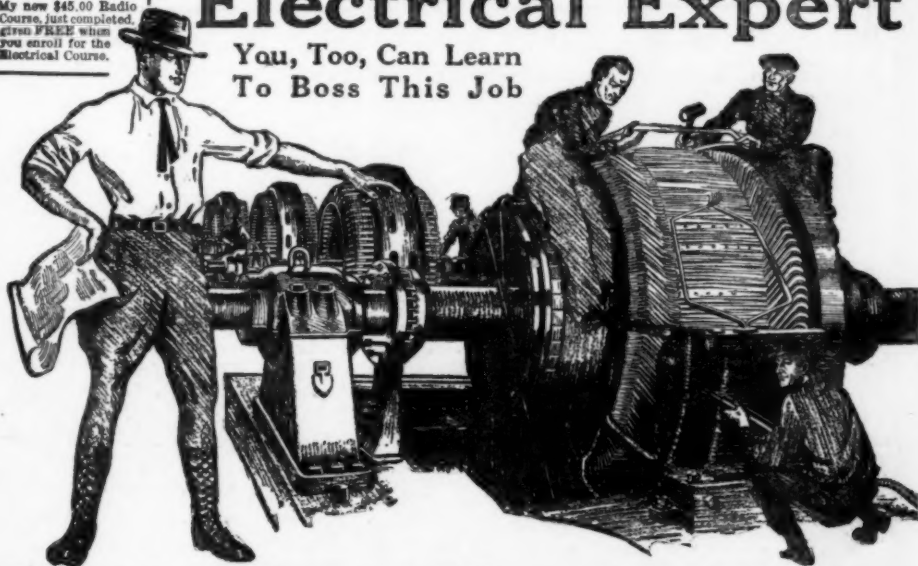


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# If You Were Dying To-night

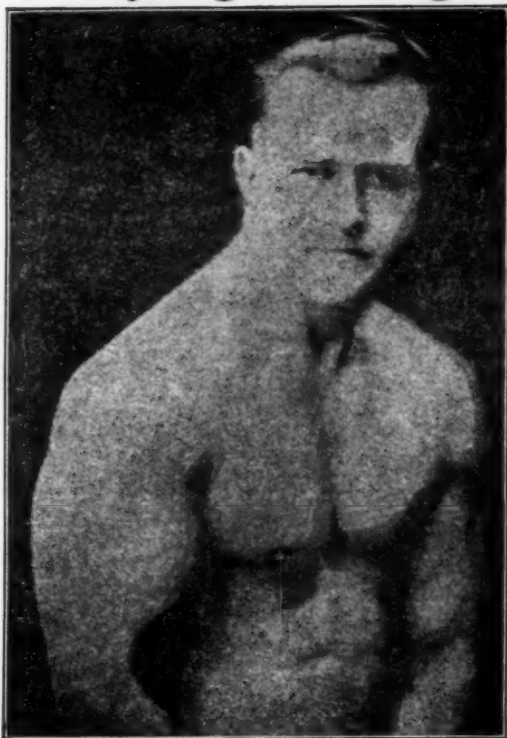
and I offered you something that would give you ten years more to live, would you take it? You'd grab it. Well, fellows, I've got it, but don't wait till you're dying or it won't do you a bit of good. It will then be too late. Right now is the time. To-morrow, or any day, some disease will get you and if you have not equipped yourself to fight it off, you're gone. I don't claim to cure disease. I am not a medical doctor, but I'll put you in such condition that the doctor will starve to death waiting for you to take sick. Can you imagine a mosquito trying to bite a brick wall? A fine chance.

## A Re-Built Man

I like to get the weak ones. I delight in getting hold of a man who has been turned down as hopeless by others. It's easy enough to finish a task that's more than half done. But give me the weak, sickly chap and watch him grow stronger. That's what I like. It's fun to me because I know I can do it and I like to give the other fellow the laugh. I don't just give you a veneer of muscle that looks good to others. I work on you both inside and out. I not only put big massive arms and legs on you, but I build up those inner muscles that surround your vital organs. The kind that give you real pep and energy, the kind that fire you with ambition and the courage to tackle anything set before you.

## All I Ask Is Ninety Days

Who says it takes years to get in shape? Show me the man who makes any such claims and I'll make him eat his words. I'll put one full inch on your arm in just 30 days. Yes, and two full inches on your chest in the same length of time. Meanwhile, I'm putting life and pep into your old back-bone. And from then on, just watch 'em grow. At the end of thirty days you won't know yourself. Your whole body will take on an entirely different appearance. But you've only started. Now comes the real work. I've only built my foundation. I want just 60 days more (90 in all) and you'll make those friends of yours who think they're strong look like something the cat dragged in.



EARLE E. LIEDERMAN as he is today

## A Real Man

When I'm through with you, you're a real man. The kind that can prove it. You will be able to do things that you had thought impossible. And the beauty of it is you keep on going. Your deep full chest breathes in rich pure air, stimulating your blood and making you just bubble over with vim and vitality. Your huge, square shoulders and your massive muscular arms have that craving for the exercise of a regular he man. You have the dash to your eye and the pep to your step that will make you admired and sought after in both the business and social world.

This is no idle prattle, fellows. If you doubt me, make me prove it. Go ahead. I like it. I have already done this for thousands of others and my records are unchallenged. What I have done for them, I will do for you. Come then, for time flies and every day counts. Let this very day be the beginning of new life to you.

## Send for My Book

# "MUSCULAR DEVELOPMENT"

It is chock full of large size photographs of both myself and my numerous pupils. Also contains a treatise on the human body and what can be done with it. This book is bound to interest you and thrill you. It will be an impetus—an inspiration to every red-blooded man. I could easily collect a big price for a book of this kind just as others are now doing, but I want every man and boy who is interested to just send the attached coupon and the book is his absolutely free. All I ask you to cover is the price of wrapping and postage—10 cents. Remember this does not obligate you in any way. I want you to have it. So it's yours to keep. Now don't delay one minute—this may be the turning point in your life to-day. So tear off the coupon and mail at once while it is on your mind.

**EARLE E. LIEDERMAN**  
Dept. 1711, 305 Broadway, New York

EARLE E. LIEDERMAN

Dept. 1711, 305 Broadway, N. Y. City.

Dear Sir:—I enclose herewith 10 cents for which you are to send me, without any obligation on my part whatever, a copy of your latest book, "Muscular Development." (Please write or print plainly.)

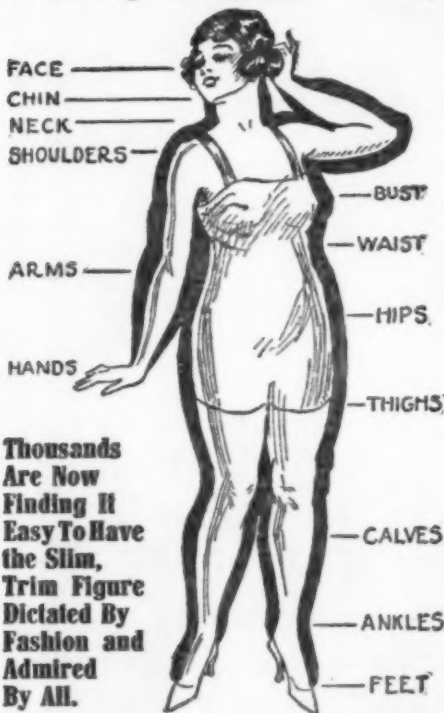
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# Would You Like To Lose a Pound a Day? Then Try This Delightfully Simple Way—



Thousands Are Now Finding It Easy To Have the Slim, Trim Figure Dictated By Fashion and Admired By All.

**ARE** you fat? You shouldn't be. Without rigorous dieting or exercise—by a simple natural process—you should quickly and easily be able to have the slender fashionable figure that is so attractive.

Scientists have discovered that excess fat is often caused by the subnormal action of a small gland. Once this gland is healthy and functioning properly, your weight should reduce naturally and without effort on your part, to the normal amount for your height.

And science has discovered a simple extract which tends to regulate the gland that controls fat. Without lifting a hand in unnecessary and violent exercise, you should find it a delightfully simple matter to have the ideal, slender figure admired by everyone.

The wonderful thing about the scientific formula known as **Rid-O-Fat** is that in losing your superfluous fat you should gain added vigor, health and energy of mind and body.

## Feel Young—Look Young

There is nothing which adds to a person's age so much as fat. A few extra pounds makes any man or woman look from five to ten years older. Not only that, the excess weight and increased heart action saps vitality and energy.

Once the gland which controls your fat is functioning properly your food should be turned into firm, solid flesh and muscle. As your weight comes down to normal you should experience a delightful and amazing improvement in your appearance. You should not only feel and look younger—you should actually be younger. You should also be in better health—a real health of energy—not the fictitious and deceiving health of fat that insurance companies say shortens the life ten years.

Complexion, health and figure are improved at the same time. The result is new vitality, magnetism and personal charm that makes for success. Tasks once hard become easy and life worth while.

**Science Discloses Method of Quickly Reducing Excess Weight—Many Losing a Pound a Day Without Starvation Dieting or Exercise—Greatly Improves Appearance. Generous Sample Sent Free.**

## Quick Results—No Exercise—No Starvation Dieting.

Within a few days you should be conscious of a new feeling of energy and lightness, taking the place of that tired, worn-out feeling.

Quickly as the fat gland resumes normal functioning you should lose weight in a healthy, normal manner. Many fat, ungainly figures are in this scientific manner helped to regain their normal and idealistic proportions, giving that fashionable slenderness and athletic poise.

And all this time you live as you please.

Nature is doing the work. No more irksome exercise—no more denying yourself of all the things you like. Take just one small, pleasant, **Rid-O-Fat** tablet after each meal. Could anything be more simple?

## Rid-O-Fat Used By 100,000 People

Since the announcement of the wonderful **Rid-O-Fat** formula it has been used by more than 100,000 people. Twenty to thirty thousand more people are writing for it every month. The following letters show what users think of the scientific **Rid-O-Fat** system of fat reduction!

### Lost Forty-One Pounds in Thirty Days

"When I wrote for your **Rid-O-Fat** sample I weighed 245 pounds. Today, which is 30 days later, I weighed only 204 pounds. A reduction of 41 pounds in a month. I am delighted. Please send me another 30-day treatment, as I want to reduce to 145 pounds, which is the correct weight for my height. I am sure that I will realize my ambition with **Rid-O-Fat** and I feel better than I have in years."

### Lost Twenty Pounds in Three Weeks

"According to weight tables I weighed exactly 20 pounds too much. **Rid-O-Fat** reduced me to normal in just a little more than three weeks. I feel better, don't get tired, and my friends say I look like a new person."

## Generous Sample FREE

I want every fat person to have a chance to try **Rid-O-Fat** in their own homes at my expense. I don't want them to take my word or that of the thousands who have used it. I want them to see for themselves that the results are more pleasing than anything I can say. To introduce **Rid-O-Fat** in a million more homes I will send a free sample to anyone who will write for it. In fact it is really more than a sample, as it is sufficient to reduce the average person several pounds. I will also send with the sample an interesting booklet that explains the scientific reason for fat, and why **Rid-O-Fat** meets with the highest approval.

**Costs Nothing!** Don't send a penny—I will send the sample and the booklet under plain wrapper and fully postpaid. This does not obligate you in any way and is never to cost you a cent. It is simply a limited offer I am making to more generally introduce **Rid-O-Fat**.

This free offer is good for only a short time, so send me your name and address on the coupon below or a post card, and I will see that the generous sample and booklet are mailed immediately under plain wrapper postpaid. Do not try to get **Rid-O-Fat** at drug stores as it is distributed only direct from my laboratory to you—remember this is a short time offer and send your name at once. **H. C. HAIST, Whinton Laboratories, 1504 Coca Cola Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.**

**H. C. HAIST, Whinton Laboratories, 1504 Coca Cola Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.**

Without obligation in any way and with the understanding it is not to cost me a cent at any time, please send me your generous free sample of **Rid-O-Fat** and free booklet under plain wrapper.

Name.....

Address.....





## Own Your Garage of Business

**LOOK** at these pictures. Twenty thousand Sweeney trained men own garages, tire shops, vulcanizing and service shops, just like these. You can be your own boss. It is easy to start in business for yourself. Then you don't have to bow down to some employer and do work you don't like. I say work for yourself. Then you are not bothered by strikes, lockouts, factories closing down. Own your own business. It's the yearning of every young man TO BE HIS OWN BOSS, and Sweeney makes it possible. How would you like to see your name above the door of a neat and profitable garage?

Sweeney trains men in eight weeks in the auto and tractor business. I have had over 60,000 graduates. I estimate 20,000 are in business for themselves.

These men had no previous experience. You don't need previous experience or any capital to speak of. There are opportunities everywhere. These men hadn't much money. But they had the Sweeney System of Practical Instruction and made good.

Look at Clayton Eden's nice garage at Ainsworth, La. Clayton says: "We operate the leading garage; all the business

we can do. Also handle Hudson, Essex and Buick cars. Owe my success to the wonderful training received at the Sweeney School."

Look at the National Garage. Roy Atkinson sent me this picture from Everett, Mo. "Worked on a farm," says Roy. "At nineteen had only \$14.00. Got father to send me to the Sweeney School. Three days after I came home I fixed a neighbor's Ford. That was my start. Today this garage is worth \$4,785.00. My business takes three men to handle. I never worked in any other garage. I used my Sweeney training. If you want to get that start, do as I did and go to the Sweeney School."

Look at John Boyer's garage at Milford, Illinois. John says: "Having a good business; busy all the time." From far-off Australia S. A. Noller writes business is fine.

What these boys have done YOU can do. If you like mechanics, write for my big free Catalog.

**MAIL THE COUPON TO DAY OR POST CARD WILL DO**



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Get my big FREE 64-page catalog. It shows hundreds of actual photographs of men at work in my magnificent new school. Tells all about wages, profits, opportunities in auto and tractor business. Explains step by step how you learn. Interesting letters from graduates telling how they made good. Shows how men come from all over the world to this big school. Makes you want to join the crowd. Tells everything you want to know. I will gladly send you a copy beautifully illustrated. I'll tell you how to get into business for yourself. No colored students accepted.

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# Finding 'The Fountain of Youth'

*Along-Sought Secret, Vital to Happiness, Has Been Discovered.*

*By H. M. Stunz*

*Alas! that spring should vanish with the rose!  
That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!*

—OMAR KHAYYAM.



A SECRET vital to human happiness has been discovered. An ancient problem which, sooner or later, affects the welfare of virtually every man and woman, has been solved. As this problem undoubtedly will come to you eventually, I urge you to read this article carefully. It may give you information of a value beyond all price.

This newly revealed secret is not a new "philosophy" of financial success. It has to do with something of far greater moment to the individual—success and happiness in love and marriage—and there is nothing theoretical, imaginative or fantastic about it, because it comes from the coldly exact realms of science and its value has been proved. It "works." And because it does work—surely, speedily and most delightfully—it is one of the most important discoveries made in many years. Thousands already bless it for having rescued them from lives of disappointment and misery.

The peculiar value of this discovery is that it removes physical handicaps which, in the past, have been considered inevitable and irremediable. I refer to the loss of youthful animation and a waning of the vital forces. These difficulties have caused untold unhappiness—failures, shattered romances, mysterious divorces. True happiness does not depend on wealth, position or fame. Primarily, it is a matter of health. Not the inefficient "half-alive" condition which ordinarily passes as "health," but the abundant, magnetic vitality of superb manhood and womanhood.

Unfortunately, this kind of health is rare. Our civilization rapidly depletes the organism and, in a physical sense, old age comes on when life should be at its prime. But this is not a tragedy of our era alone. Ages ago a Persian poet voiced

humanity's immemorial complaint that "spring should vanish with the rose" and the song of youth too soon come to an end. And for centuries before Omar Khayyam wrote his immortal verses, science had searched—and in the centuries that have passed since then has continued to search—without halt, for the fabled "fountain of youth," an infallible method of renewing energy lost or depleted by disease, overwork, worry, excesses or advancing age.

Now the long search has been rewarded. A "fountain of youth" has been found! Science announces unconditionally that youthful vigor can be restored quickly and safely. Lives clouded by weakness can be illuminated by the sunlight of health and joy. Old age, in a sense, can be kept at bay and youth made more glorious than ever. And the discovery which makes these amazing results possible is something any man or woman, young or old, can easily use in the privacy of the home.

The discovery had its origin in famous European laboratories. Brought to America, it was developed into a product that has given most remarkable results in thousands of cases, many of which had defied all other treatments. In scientific circles the discovery has been known and used for several years and has caused unbounded amazement by its quick, harmless, gratifying action. Now, in convenient tablet form, under the name of Korex compound, it is available to the general public.

Anyone who finds the youthful stamina ebbing, life losing its charm and color or the feebleness of old age coming on too soon, can obtain a double-strength treatment of this compound under a positive guarantee that it costs nothing if it fails and only \$2 if it produces prompt and gratifying results. In average cases, the compound often brings about amazing benefits in from twenty-four to forty-eight hours.

Simply write in confidence to the Melton Laboratories, 2148 Melton Bldg., Kansas City, Mo., and this wonder restorative will be mailed to you in a plain wrapper. You may enclose \$2 or, if you prefer, just send your name without money and pay the postman \$2 and postage when the parcel is delivered. In either case, if you report within ten days that the Korex compound has not given satisfactory results, your money will be refunded upon request. The Melton Laboratories are nationally known and thoroughly reliable. Moreover, their offer is fully guaranteed, so no one need hesitate to accept it. If you need this remarkable scientific rejuvenator, write for it today.





in

# The Most Daring Book Ever Written!

Elinor Glyn, famous author of "Three Weeks," has written an amazing book that should be read by every man and woman—married or single. "The Philosophy of Love" is not a novel—it is a penetrating searchlight fearlessly turned on the most intimate relations of men and women. Read below how you can get this daring book at our risk—without advancing a penny.

**W**ILL you marry the man you love, or will you take the one you can get?

If a husband stops loving his wife, or becomes infatuated with another woman, who is to blame—the husband, the wife, or the "other woman"?

Will you win the girl you want, or will Fate select your Mate?

Should a bride tell her husband what happened at seventeen?

Will you be able to hold the love of the one you cherish—or will your marriage end in divorce?

Do you know how to make people like you?

If you can answer the above questions—if you know all there is to know about winning a woman's heart or holding a man's affections—you don't need "The Philosophy of Love." But if you are in doubt—if you don't know just how to handle your husband, or satisfy your wife, or win the devotion of the one you care for—then you must get this wonderful book. You can't afford to take chances with your happiness.

## What Do YOU Know About Love?

**D**O you know how to win the one you love? Do you know why husbands, with devoted, virtuous wives, often become secret slaves to creatures of another "world"—and how to prevent it? Why do some men antagonize women, finding themselves beating against a stone wall in affairs of love? When is it dangerous to disregard convention? Do you know how to curb a headstrong man, or are you the victim of men's whims?

Do you know how to retain a man's affection always? How to attract men? Do you know the things that most irritate a man? Or disgust a woman? Can you tell when a man really loves you—or must you take his word for it? Do you know what you **MUST NOT DO** unless you want to be a "wall flower" or an "old maid"? Do you know the little things that make women like you? Why do "wonderful lovers" often become thoughtless husbands soon after marriage—and how can the love prevent it? Do you know how to make marriage a perpetual honeymoon?

In "The Philosophy of Love," Elinor

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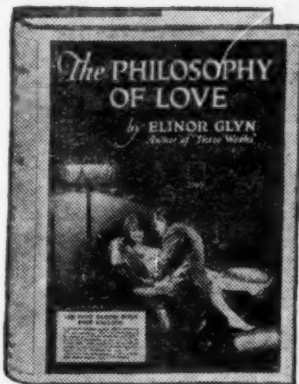
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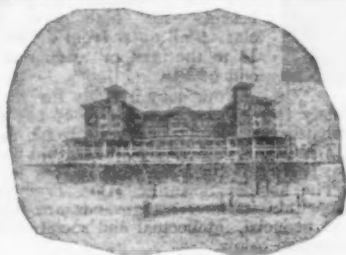
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No. 3

# The SMART SET

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## Theologicae

By L. M. Hussey

### I

NATURAL philosophy does not sufficiently explain man's rise from lesser animals. One may easily question his superior sagacity, which is usually assumed to mark him off from the beasts. It is probable that the pithecanthropus dropped the first half of his name, not when his brain grew physically larger, but when there entered into it a realization that no lower animal ever experiences—the sense of sin.

The sense of sin has been one of the great, elevating forces of civilized humanity. It is, in a way, the impulse of civilization. From the standpoint of civilization a sinless world would be deplorable, retrograde and ruinous.

As civilizing forces the missionaries to the heathen show a very practical sagacity and demonstrate the truth of

this thesis. Having come to live among a primitive people, what is their first endeavor? To preach the Sermon on the Mount? To spread the gospel of Pity? By no means! Their first instinctive endeavor is to inculcate a sense of sin. The Virgin Islander, who may in his natural state possess all the virtues of the Beatitudes, is not a man, and is not civilized, until he becomes ashamed. Before Christ, the loin cloth. The heathen maid must be made conscious of her legs prior to any knowledge of her soul. The Bushman becomes a man as soon as he knows himself to be a sinner.

The animals are without sin. A tomcat is naïvely unaware of any limitations to his amorous proclivities. You would have a sinless world? A return to the animal, say I. Our ancestors, the simians, became men when they saw themselves iniquitous.



## II

If Pity is the highest grace, then Wretchedness is a holy thing. The schemes for material betterment, even though inept and useless, are thus seen to be irreligious. They aim to remove from the world Wretchedness, which is the mother of Pity.

## III

THE wage of sin may be death but so is the wage of superiority. The felon and Chatterton, the swindler and Oscar Wilde—iniquity and preëminence—both are punished.

## IV

THE instinct of self-preservation has always forbidden humanity to seek the truth. Humanity needs not the truth, but saving illusions.

## V

It is not the truth that prevails but the thing steadfastly believed, whether it be truth or error. This is usually error, for the truth is too relative and shifting for ardent adherence. On the other hand, error is an unvanquishable rock upon which men erect the bulwarks of their existence.

## VI

OF all the saving errors, Art is the most passionately exquisite. It substitutes for the common belief in the significance of conduct a belief in the significance of beauty.

## VII

CONSCIENCE was a rare thing in human life until the appearance of the middle class. Only the middle class has a conscience. The poor cannot afford one, the rich do not need one. Conscience is the luxury of the bourgeoisie.

## VIII

MORE horrible than death are certain

kinds of immortality. The perpetuity of a bad statue, an infamous bust, an horrific portrait—the parks and galleries of the world are crammed with these horrors.

## IX

SPEAKING of the passions, it is usually assumed that asceticism is an escape from passion. This is untrue—the most passionate of men is an ascetic. An ascetic is one who renounces the distractions of many easy pleasures for the overwhelming seduction of a single idea. Thus he achieves a passionate absorption far beyond that of the most inveterate sensualist.

## X

It is commonly affirmed that reason is the faculty whereby truth is discerned from appearances. In general, nothing could be more untrue. The chief function of reason is to devise arguments in support of our prejudices.

## XI

THE modern concepts of Deity are not so philosophically sound as some of the concepts of the ancients. In these days God is presumed to be a Power of Righteousness, and no one ever questions the presumptive axiom that he must, of necessity, be Good. It never occurred to the ancients that Deity must necessarily be Good. To them he was, like the laws of nature, simply a Power.

## XII

AFTER a toilsome scrutiny of all the indictments against human life as it is lived, one is able to reduce the difficulties to two statements of fact. The trouble with the world is humanity. The trouble with humanity is human nature.

The physicians of evil are now invited, after this succinct diagnosis, to suggest the appropriate cure.



# Rope

By Charles MacArthur

[Author of "Hang It All"]

## I

THE night clerk at the Y. M. C. A. Hotel said that it was a fine morning, and Mr. Stovich made ringing response.

"You said a mouthfull! It sure is one swell day."

"For me"—he added significantly.

Mr. Stovich drolly winked his eye as he made this comment. It was the night clerk's cue, but he muffed it completely. Instead of rising to the occasion, he merely glanced at the clock, observed that it was six o'clock, and said:

"Ain't you up kind of early this morning?"

Stovich could hardly believe his ears. It was too astounding and incredible. He scanned the other's face in the expectation that his words would prove to be a jest. But no. Obviously, the man did not know who Mr. Stovich was, or what he was doing abroad at this early hour. Perceiving this, Stovich smiled coldly, and with considerable dignity remarked:

"I see you don't read the newspapers."

"Why—what do you mean?" replied the night clerk, with maddening lack of comprehension.

"You ought to know about that little neck-tie party we're giving them hunnies this morning."

Mr. Stovich accompanied this reproach with an indignant stare.

"That's right!" cried the clerk, instantly and profoundly impressed.

"You're Mr. Stovich, ain't you?"

Stovich exhibited all his gold teeth

in a very gratified smile. He nodded.

"The day clerk was tellin' me," continued the other. "Excuse me, brother, for not knowing you!"

"No offense," said Stovich graciously.

He smiled again and passed into the quick lunch that adjoined the hotel lobby, happily conscious that he was followed by a pop-eyed stare. Presently he was followed by the night clerk himself, who stood at a respectful distance while Stovich added a bottle of ketchup to a plate brimming with beans.

"It ain't hurt your appetite none!"

For reply, Stovich impaled a large chunk of bacon with his fork. It disappeared with a gurgling, sand-sucker effect.

"I bet them guys over in the jail ain't very hungry, hey?"

Mr. Stovich winked that such was undoubtedly the case. Encouraged, the night clerk sat down.

"Tell me something," he asked: "are you goin' to see 'em get it?"

This was too much. Stovich stopped eating to stare.

"I mean, are you goin' t' be right in the same room with 'em—anyways near the scaffold?"

By shifting a quantity of bread and beans to the right cheek, Stovich managed to release a guffaw. His eyes glistened at the preposterous ignorance of the man.

"Am I?" he repeated—"Am I!"

His Adam's apple worked violently on a four-inch plunge. Soon it was possible for him to talk.



"I'm the guy," he explained modestly, "that does the dirty work."

A segment of his cinnamon bun went into his coffee with this, but he did not take his eyes once from the night clerk's face or risk missing out on a second of the ensuing surprise.

"Say!—no kidding—you don't mean—you spring the trap?"

"That's all!" replied Stovich. His smile spread in spite of his modest disinclination to exult.

"God! I wouldn't want your job!" The night clerk meant it.

"Why not?"

"No, thanks! Nix on that stuff for mine!"

"Oh, is that so?" Stovich interposed, with some heat. "If everybody felt like you do, where the hell would we be at? Huh? Your life wouldn't be worth a nickel! Maybe you don't give a damn, but did you ever stop to think of what would happen to your mother, and your sister, if there wasn't any cap'tal punishment? Supposin' some dinge came along and—how would you feel about that?"

The night clerk supposed that was one way of looking at it.

"You're damn right!" declared Stovich. "Besides, I guess you'd change your mind pretty quick if somebody handed you a hundred bucks every time you pushed a little button—"

"A hundred bucks!"

"Three hundred bucks this mornin'," Stovich corrected amiably. "We're goin' t' knock off three of 'em—in a row!"

He beamed at the other's undisguised envy.

"Yes, sir!—three pushes at a hundred a push! I guess that's kinda rotten, huh?"

"Pretty soft," said the night clerk, dismally. "I work three months for that."

"And I work three minutes." Stovich could not forbear from rubbing it in.

The night clerk proceeded to other questions. How many men had Stovich seen die? Was it true that they

always loaded them up with morphine? How did they act when the rope was put around their necks? Was it a fact that doomed men stood constantly in need of a plumber?

Stovich resented this examination as a cow might resent the milking activities of an inexperienced farmhand. They had nothing to do with his three hundred dollar fee, and by degrees his manner became professional, reticent and strained.

Rising abruptly, he selected a sagging slab of strawberry shortcake from the glass counter. He was mindful of the extravagance of his purchase, but he salved his economical soul with the reflection that it was not every day that somebody handed him three hundred dollars. This was not the time for self-denial.

One shortcake led to another, and it was twenty minutes past six before Stovich had finished his repast. He helped himself liberally to toothpicks, paid his check, and strolled magnificently through the lobby to the street, with the night clerk twittering at his heels. It became annoying.

## II

YET this show of respect was pleasing, he was forced to admit. Certainly he didn't get any too much consideration at the jail. There he lived, breathed and had his being simply and solely as "Sap," an unfortunate sobriquet he had acquired in the first week of his career.

It had become so common an appellation that his real name had long ago been forgotten by his associates. "Sap" had a rather friendly significance now, but somehow Stovich could never forgive its definition. It hurt like a sore toe, and as he moved down the street toward the jail, he meditated for the ten thousandth time on all the reasons that may have inclined his persecutors to fix so durable and so offensive a name upon him. He finally concluded, as he had every time he had considered the matter in the past, that the unpleasant expression and the motives for its application



originated with one Ernest Fink, long an assistant warden at the jail.

Ernest, he reflected, had substantial reasons for wishing to belittle him. Briefly, Stovich had cut him out in the affections of Gracie Blaha—cut him out thoroughly and forever, and in less than a year's time.

He chuckled at the recollection of how he had courted Grace right under Ernest's nose; and he snorted out loud at Ernest's probable feelings when it became known that on this very day the lovely Gracie would be united in bonds of holy matrimony to the enterprising Mr. Stovich. "Sap" Stovich, if you like. He should worry!

Grace didn't think he was a sap. Grace thought he was a swell fellow, with a smart noodle on him. Well, why shouldn't she? Hadn't he made good?

"You're damn right I have!" he said aloud in answer to this speculation.

Not that Gracie hadn't been responsible for his success. He realized that if it hadn't been for her, he would be a bum, just like Ernest Fink and all the rest of those smart-alecks at the jail. But she had got after him in time. She made him move into the Y. M. C. A. Hotel and save his money; and when he didn't save it fast enough she saved it for him. Every week he handed her his pay, earned in guarding prisoners between executions. He reserved just fifteen dollars for his personal expenses. After every hanging, he handed her the hundred dollar fee untouched; and Gracie banked it all.

Leave it to her! In less than a year she had saved seventeen hundred cold bucks, and it was right there in the old bank in her name! None of those guys at the jail could touch him for any of it. He could tell them he didn't have it, and it would be the truth. Gracie had put him wise to that.

"You're a bad little Stovie, and you spend your money foolish," she used to tell him. "You let me save it, and we'll have a nice little nest-egg when we get married."

Gracie had promised to marry him

the moment the bank account reached the two thousand dollar mark. Now the glad day was at hand. With the three hundred dollars that would be handed to him this morning, their savings would amount to two thousand dollars even, not counting interest.

He wondered how they would spend it. He supposed Gracie ought to have a silk nightie or two, if they didn't spend a dime on anything else. He knew where to go to get the very one. It was lavender with a lot of lace frills on it. Every day he had created a thousand intoxicating pictures of how she would look with it on, and now, when he considered how soon that picture would be materialized, he could scarcely repress his exhilaration.

"Oh, boy!" he exclaimed, and quickened his pace.

### III

His heart sang within him as he drew near the jail, walking on the heel and ball of each foot. For the first time in four years, he smiled at the policeman guarding the jail door and wished the turnkey a jovial good morning. Joy mounted to the pitch of ecstasy, so that when he saw the hated Ernest, author and finisher of all his tribulations, he could hardly refrain from surprising him with the glad good news. Only the realization that the announcement would bring a pain to his rival more keen than his own unspeakable joy caused him to hold his peace, even when Ernest provoked him with an unusually surly greeting.

"Well, Sap! Yah finally got here, did ya?"

"Why, what's eatin' you?" inquired Stovich, nettled more by his tone than his use of the hated name.

"You'll find out when the boss sees yah," replied Ernest. "Don't yah know, we're making it an hour ahead of time today?"

Stovich soon discovered this circumstance to be true. The editor of the morning *Herald* had estimated that he



could put on 10,000 extra city circulation if the three men could be conveniently hanged before the last dead-line of his paper. He had communicated this fact to the sheriff, who was more or less obligated to the *Herald* for his job. Consequently, the time of the executions had been advanced one hour to meet the emergency. It is true the victims uttered some complaint at this arrangement, but they were told that daylight saving had been declared during the night and that, if they didn't like it, they could do something else!

A dozen reporters were already on the scene. They were impatient. Stovich had no time to lose. Hurriedly, he visited the death chamber and tested the ropes with large bags of sand, equal to the weight of each intended victim. Ernest grudgingly helped him in deference to the growing lack of time. Presently the paraphernalia was ready.

The ropes were new and yellow and strong. The trap worked like a charm. Stovich removed the sand bags and reported to the sheriff that two of the doomed men could come and get their medicine.

The bootleggers, aldermen, baseball writers, professional athletes, doctors and reporters who had been ordained to witness the spectacle now presented their tickets and flocked into the death chamber, making a dive for the good seats. Good-natured confusion ensued. Much loud prophecy on the part of the veterans to the effect that the stomachs of the newcomers would not be equal to the exhibition. Much stout denial on the part of the newcomers. More banter of the same sort floated about the long, bare, white-washed room from the rows of benches that marched back from the high, stagelike scaffold to the furthestmost brick wall.

The hubbub was added to by a professional bondsman, slightly stewed, who knocked a turnkey unconscious for suggesting that he remove his hat and cigar. Stovich was well pleased at this diversion. The turnkey was one of his most inveterate persecutors, and

he only wished he had done the hitting.

The tumult increased when a prominent prize-fighter appeared at the iron gate as escort to a couple of women, with whom he had been drinking the night through in anticipation of the morning's entertainment. The turnkeys by this time were thoroughly incensed at the treatment they were getting and massed to throw the tipsy trio out of doors. Loud recriminations issued from all the combatants and partisan cheers arose from the crowd.

The turmoil was such that the sheriff, who had been reading the death warrants to the doomed, came flying downstairs to investigate. A heated discussion followed. The pugilist's lady friends were thrown out and he was admitted to the death chamber on his promise of good behavior following the warm personal endorsement of Alderman Twombly and assurances from the crowd that he was a hell of a swell fellow when he was sober.

Matters were now in readiness.

The sheriff finished reading the death warrants and presently appeared on the scaffold with the warden. He teetered for a time on his toes, nodded to a dozen or so of his friends, and addressed a few by their first names. Evidently he had been playing poker with them the night before, as not a few took occasion to rail pleasantly of marked cards and the advisability of hanging the sheriff instead of the intended victims. The sheriff silenced this criticism with a majestic wave of his hand as the shuffle of feet and the sound of voices drifted down the upper corridor into the death chamber.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life . . ."

The strong intonation of the prison chaplain was repeated in faltering echoes by the doomed.

"Whoso believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live . . ."

Sing-song echoes, drawing nearer.

By the use of vigorous pantomime, the sheriff exhorted the audience to refrain from conversation and to extin-



guish cigars and cigarettes. It was futile. Desperately, he jerked his thumb in the direction of the rising voices of the dead-marchers. The spectators advised him to go back and sit down. His gestures became pleading. He cajoled them with winks and scowls and frowns. They told him to go and soak his head. "And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me, shall never die . . ."

The mortuary procession appeared upon the scaffold. First the chaplain in a shiny Prince Albert coat, affecting to read from a little book the passage he had cause to know backward and by heart. Then two of the murderers, manacled and supported by four guards. They shuffled mechanically forward, repeating the minister's words with blue lips and dry and swollen tongues.

Still mumbling the ritual, each was led to the trap. Stovich and Ernest deftly substituted their manacles for leather straps and enveloped them with shrouds.

"The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want . . ."

With the rhythmic unison of a trained acrobatic team, Stovich and his partner fetched the ropes from the cross-trees of the scaffold. Quickly they drew each noose about its destined neck. One of the men made a frightful grimace, sticking his tongue out as far as it would go, rolling his eyes inward. The other's knees sagged horribly, but both recovered themselves and continued to recite the ritual as gallantly as possible. One even smiled a little, causing the dean of the hanging reporters to scribble a memo that "he died as cowards of his stripe always die—with a cheap effort at bravado." That was good stuff and had the advantage of being moral as well. The reporter had used it for each of the thirty-two hangings he had attended.

"He leadeth me beside still waters . . ."

Stovich adjusted the muslin masks and stepped back, as the holy clerk galloped into the beautiful Psalm of David. The electric button was fixed to the scaffold rail. It had been agreed that when the recitation reached: "Surely

goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life . . ." he would press it and release the trap that is the criminal's last exit from the underworld.

The crowd caught its breath as the stiff stance of the sheriff and his aides indicated the end was at hand. Stovich nervously fondled the button to see if it was still in place. The condemned creatures shuffled their feet nervously, expectantly, as one who is about to take a five thousand foot dive. . . .

Cries rang down the steel corridor outside the chamber of death.

"*Sheriff! Oh, sheriff!*"

Guards burst into the room.

"*Governor's on the 'phone—says to call it off!*"

The newspaper reporters swarmed behind the sheriff as he gave a curt command and raced down the corridor to his office.

The chaplain closed his book, keeping the place with his finger. He murmured something to the two men, who stood motionless and trembling on the scaffold.

Instantly the sheriff returned. He verified the news.

"Well, I'll be damned!" Stovich exploded. He was thoroughly disgusted.

A thought possessed him.

"Say, Boss, how do you know it's the Governor? How do you know it ain't a joke, or maybe some of these birds' friends? Looks to me like somebody's tryin' to make a sucker out o' you!"

"It was him, all right," said the sheriff briefly. "He says they're innocent."

"Yah—I suppose!" spat Stovich bitterly.

"Hell!" he added. "Somebody's a fine fathead—that's all I got to say!"

"Don't take it so hard, Sap," consoled the sheriff. "He didn't say nothing about the other guy."

#### IV

BUT compared to the original program, the execution of the third criminal was a fizzle. Even the spectators thought so, and many of the more experienced veterans would not even stay to



see it take place. It was entirely too much in the nature of anti-climax.

For the first time in his long, useful and industrious career, Stovich was thoroughly sour on his job. On other occasions he had been stimulated by the thought that in pressing the button that worked the trap he was supervening in the prosaic affairs of men with the might of an angry God, ending the sinful schemes that originated in the gray gelatin of his victims' skulls—ending their loves, their hopes, their dreams—exterminating millions yet unborn. Really profound thoughts were inspired in his brain by that gentle pressure of his thumb. Often he toyed with the apparatus to demonstrate how imperceptible a push would send the two-ton mechanism of the gallows crashing and tear the souls from their habitation.

But today he was surly and sore. When the victim complained that the rope was adjusted too tightly, Stovich told me he was in a fair way of getting a sock on his smeller, and he did not wait for the prearranged signal to spring the trap. He had taken enough chances for one day!

At the customary buffet luncheon tendered by the warden to the spectators following the execution, Stovich could not eat for the first time in years, so complete was the collapse of his castles in the air. The sight of heaps of pork and cheese sandwiches, bowls of dill pickles, and cases of bottled beer, made him sick to his stomach, especially as the famous appetite of Ernest Fink was never better. Moreover, Ernest had divined the cause of his disappointment and was communicating his findings to everybody in the room.

"Look at the Sap," he bawled boisterously. "He's green around the gills! Two hundred iron men snatched right out of his mitt!"

Everybody joined in the loud laughter that followed this witticism. Stovich felt the blood rush to his head. He sensed that Ernest had somehow guessed the terms of his pact with Gracie Blaha. He felt that he was gloating over the delay in his plans. Unreasonably, he

blamed Ernest for the reprieves and he longed to give him a black eye, right there in front of everybody.

Matters were not helped by Ernest's attitude. He advanced toward Stovich with a pork sandwich in one hand and a cheese sandwich in the other. His mouth was filled with both, but not sufficiently filled to prevent him from making hardly articulate jests on the financial blow Stovich had suffered.

"What were you goin' t' do with the dough—if you'd a got it?" he inquired suggestively, a leer lighting his face.

This was the last lash and too much to endure. Stovich thought of a devastating reply.

"Marry your girl, if you really want to know," he retorted. "Now laugh! I guess that'll hold you!"

Ernest's reaction to this news was surprising. He swallowed heavily and held out his hand.

"Old boy," he declared gruffly, "I know it. I heard about it this morning, and I want to congratulate you. Put her there!"

Stovich accepted his hand in odd astonishment.

"Who told you?" he asked.

"Gracie," replied Ernest.

He laid down one of his sandwiches and turned away, applying a pocket handkerchief to his eye.

Stovich was touched. He could well imagine the scene that had taken place—the lover's wanted ardor, and Gracie's cruel disdain. He gripped his rival's hand.

"Thanks, Ernie," he said, "I hope there ain't any hard feelings."

"Hell—no!" replied the other. "It's just the way it goes."

Ernest smiled.

Stovich thought it was the gamest smile he had ever seen, and pitied the aching heart it so lightly disguised. He began to think more of Ernest.

Congratulations ensued. Ernest offered Stovich a cigar.

"Thanks," said Stovich, sliding it into his upper vest pocket, "I'll smoke it later on."

He was pressed to have a bottle of



beer, but he recalled an important engagement.

"It's with Gracie, Ernest," he vouchsafed awkwardly, "as long as you know about it anyways."

"Oh, well, then, we won't keep you," Ernest generously interrupted. "Give her my best regards when you see her!"

Stovich said he would and departed, pausing at the sheriff's office for his one hundred dollar fee. A loud peel of laughter arose from the sheriff's quarters as he took his leave of the jail. Stovich guessed that the boys were kidding Ernest. He felt avenged and forgiving.

## V

THE trysting place was an amusement park near the city limits, in deference to certain sentimental associations that Stovich nurtured in his breast. The first beautiful hours of his romance had passed amid the lights and thrills and pleasant music of the place. The precipitous perils of the roller-coaster had made it possible for him to encircle Gracie's slender waist for the first intoxicating time; and it was among the tenebrous windings of the old mill that he had poured out his love and replaced Ernest as Gracie's cavalier.

Multicolored memories of joy made riot in his heart as he reached the outer gate. Magic casements opened out on fiery pleasures to be. The shuffling of feet, the cries of the barkers, the merry click of the turnstiles, made sweet medley with his thoughts. They were projected, too, in the pleasing chords of a street piano near at hand:

All the bells are ringing for me and my gal,  
The birds are singing for me and my gal,  
Everybody's been knowing to a wedding  
we're going.

And for weeks they've been sewing, every  
Susie and Sal.

The parson's waitin' for me and my gal!  
They're celebrating for me and my gal,  
And by and by, we're goin' to build a little  
house,

For two or three or four—or mo-o-o-o-re  
In loveland, for me and my gal.

The song was an omen. Fired with

its suggestion, he purposed to marry Gracie that day, willy-nilly, two thousand or no two thousand dollars. In fancy, he led her to the old mill and once again declared his passion as their craft bumped tranquilly along the dark mazes, past canvas Neptunes and plaster mermaids, out into the joyous sunshine. In fancy, she threw her arms about his neck and kissed him, signifying assent. Forthwith his mind envisaged a thousand and one rainbow nights with his beloved, rapturously explored the en-purpled borderlands of dreams, paused long in each vale and bower.

He was jarred rudely into consciousness by a tug at his sleeve and a hoarse suggestion:

"Guess your weight, mister?"

Stovich's first impulse was to kill the impious hoodlum who had arrested such a glowing train of thought, until it occurred to him that it might not be a bad idea to yield to the fellow's suggestion. First, he had not weighed himself in a long time. Second, there was a good chance that the man might guess wrong, in which event he had promised that the experiment would cost nothing. Finally, it was a cheap and interesting way to spend the time against Gracie's arrival. Moved by these reasons, he followed the shillaber to a tripod from which swung a chair.

The weight-guesser patted him professionally about the body. Stovich smiled confidently. He did not see the fellow pause at his hip pocket and draw a cross with a piece of chalk, any more than he felt that same pocket explored and emptied of his wallet as he took his seat in the chair. It was very expertly done.

"Well, well, well—what's this?" cried the weight-guesser as he gazed into his dial a second later. "Two hundred and forty pounds! I certainly got fooled that time!"

"You certainly did," laughed Stovich cheerfully, as he skipped out of the chair. He roared at the other's chagrin.

"It's the way I carry it," he volunteered. "You don't see no bay-window here, brother."



The weight guesser was no longer interested, however, and Stovich wandered proudly away. He continued to glow at his ability to carry weight deceptively for twenty minutes, when he began to wonder what had happened to Gracie. She was usually so punctual.

An hour went by. Stovich wanted to telephone her house, but he reflected that if he did so, Gracie would doubtless appear at the rendezvous and go away again the moment he entered the drug store booth. For another hour, he tried to figure out a solution to this dilemma. There was none. He was tired from walking up and down, but there was no place to sit. He was hungry, but there was nothing to eat.

Hold! Just inside the amusement park stood a frankfurter stand, operated by a swarthy Greek who enjoined passersby to come and get them while they were hot. Stovich meditated. It would cost him ten cents to enter the park but there were seats inside from which he could survey the entrance. And he felt that he was starving to death. Resolutely, he found a dime and entered and made his way toward the vendor of hot dogs.

But ere he approached, several small boys, possessed of many devils and an unreasonable antipathy to Greeks, swooped down on the stand and gathered up a dozen frankfurters that were toasting on the griddle; running away again faster than Balaam traversed the blue fields of Jerusalem. The proprietor uttered a terrible shriek and gave chase, calling God and man to his assistance. But the boys, anticipating pursuit, had stationed a large band of confederates among some trees hard by the stand. This auxiliary party now made a hasty sortie and began a successful sack of the establishment; perceiving which, the bewildered and bedeviled Greek turned from one pursuit to another, and so lost his chance to capture either or any of the robber band.

Delirious with rage and disappointment, he was taking stock of his frankfurters as Stovich drew nigh. The

latter listened patiently to a long tale of injustice, delivered entirely in Greek, while a fresh hot dog was being roasted and inserted into a bun. It was heavily anointed with mustard and a pint of chow-chow at Stovich's request and under his personal supervision. He accepted it eagerly and took a large and greedy bite without preliminary payment.

"Say!" cried the Greek in no uncertain tones, "That's fifteen cents!"

Stovich nodded, being wholly unable to reply, and complacently reached for the pocket in which he kept his small change. It was empty, his last dime having been spent for admission to the park. The Greek watched his movements with catlike concern and growing alarm.

Stovich smiled with renewed assurance. He reached for his wallet—and stopped dead.

He sensed, rather than felt, a large emptiness in his back pocket. His jaw dropped; he stood as one stricken of the palsy.

"Well," said the Greek ominously.

"It's gone!" cried Stovich. "My wallet!—with a hundred dollars in it!"

"Yeh!" mocked the hot-dog entrepreneur. "Well, never mind your hundred dollars! How about my fifteen cents?"

"I had it," shouted Stovich, "when I left the jail!"

This remark was unfortunate, for at the word "jail" the Greek considered that he was again the victim of law-breakers and leaped half-way across the counter to seize what was left of the hot-dog from Stovich's shaking fingers.

Not content with the recovery of his property, he hurled it full into Stovich's face with a great resultant splatter of chow-chow and mustard sauce. Blinded for a moment, Stovich offered no resistance and did not wake up to his peril until the Greek, thoroughly angered by the vicissitudes of the day, jumped over the counter and punched him in the eye, screaming loudly for the police. Another and another blow followed the first. By the time the police came, one



of Stovich's eyes was closed and some very costly bridge-work was a total wreck.

The police separated them and listened to his story. Painfully, he went over the events of the day in an effort to recall when and where his pocket had been plucked. Suddenly, and with a great light, he remembered the exploratory technique of the weight-guesser.

He was all for leading the officers to the spot at once, but they assured him that it would be a great mistake for a man of his position to appear on the street in such a bruised and bemustarded condition, persuading him to wash his face first of all. While he was doing this, the sergeant sneaked down the street and warned the weight-guesser to get out of sight for the next few minutes. When Stovich conducted the police to the scene, the trimmers were far away, chair, tripod, wallet and all.

Stovich accompanied the officers to the police station to make a report. While there, he made free use of the telephone to call up Gracie. The landlady at her boarding house answered the phone.

"Why, I thought you knew!" she exclaimed in response to Stovich's inquiry, "Gracie's on her honeymoon!"

Stovich was speechless for a full moment.

"What's the joke?" he demanded thickly when words came.

"I'm not joking," responded the landlady. "They left for Niagara Falls this afternoon—she and Ernest Fink."

"Is that so?" roared Stovich. "What about my seventeen hundred dollars?"

"What about it?" asked the landlady, sourly.

Stovich swayed and hung up.

## VI

NONE of the policemen would lend him carfare, and so he walked home. It was eight miles to the Y. M. C. A.

Hotel. He reached the place at eleven P. M. The night clerk was on duty.

"Why, Mr. Stovich!" he exclaimed, noting the Serbian sunset under his left eye, "did you get hurt?"

"You're a smart guy, ain't you!" Stovich snarled.

"You *look* like one," he added, and retired to his room.

Long he sat there and pondered on the futility of life. Nearly two years of pinching and scrimping and hard work for a dirty, sneaking, double-crossing snake in the grass that he had treated like a white woman. Nothing had been too good for her. She could have had anything she wanted. Why?—because he had trusted her, and this is what he got. As far as that smirking, sneaking, smart-aleck husband of hers was concerned—well. . . .

He laughed. It was a hollow, bitter laugh. Mechanically, he began to undress. In detaching his watch and chain, he felt a bulge in his vest pocket and discovered the cigar Ernest had given him after his execution.

He was about to fling it from the open window when he was restrained by sober second thought. That particular cigar had cost him just seventeen hundred dollars—more than a year's hard work. It was the most expensive cigar ever made. He stared ironically at the brown wrapper and the gaily colored band.

He wondered how it would feel to smoke a seventeen hundred dollar cigar. Still wondering, he bit savagely at the end and struck a match.

As he might have expected, it was a piece of rope. Well, rope was his specialty. . . .

He smiled grimly at the jest and took a long, hard pull.

## VII

THERE was a blinding flash and a deafening report as the cigar exploded.





# The Three Things

By F. Gregory Hartswick

## I

THE father of Gorgias sent him to Athens to school. When he returned at the expiration of his first year, his father asked him what he had learned.

"I learned the rudiments of the science of geometry," replied the youth, "and the elements of rhetoric. I also learned to say 'The sandal of my sister-in-law is on the veranda' in the Medean tongue, and parts of the ancient history of our land."

"And did you learn nothing else?" inquired his father.

"Yes," said Gorgias. "I learned that too much of the wine of Samos gives one a headache on the following morning."

His father smiled.

"Good!" said he. "You may return for another year."

## II

At the end of the second year, Gorgias was again asked what he had learned.

"I learned more of the science of geometry," he answered, "and the difference between *synecdoche* and *metonymy*; I can write a short business letter in the Medean tongue, and

I know the history of our land up to three hundred years ago."

"And is that all?" once more asked his father.

"No," replied Gorgias. "I learned also that when a man meets any woman, be she *hætera* or lady, there is going to be love-making at some time in the future."

"Excellent!" cried the father. "You may return for your third year."

## III

When Gorgias came home for the third time, his father asked the usual question.

"I learned," said the youth in reply, "the whole of the science of geometry, how to carry on a fluent conversation in the Medean tongue, and the final principles of literary composition, together with what is *zeugma*; and I have completed the history of our land up to the present time."

Gorgias paused a moment, and then added without waiting to be asked, "I have learned also that any question may be successfully argued upon either side."

His father sighed with relief.

"Your education is complete, my son," he said. "Go, take your place in the world."





# The Man Who Was God

[A Complete Novelette]

By Lois Montross

## I

IT was half-past ten. The soiled menu card of the Parker Hotel stated that breakfast was not served after ten o'clock. The fat, coy waitress in flesh-colored georgette blouse pointed out the rule to a bulky man who had just seated himself confidently at the cleanest table.

"Don't kid me, little girl," he said, smiling at her lazily. "Why, I used to live in this town."

"Little girl"—that was flattering; and his irrelevant argument confused her fattish thoughts. She blinked and wavered.

"Coffee, grapefruit, pork chop, scrambled eggs and rolls," he named with gentle finality.

She stared at the queer green stone on his pale, plump hand as he smoothed his black hair.

"Run along," he added. "Daddy's hungry. He hit Grackleton at twelve last night."

As she went back to convince the cook, she coquettishly adjusted the slipping strap of her obvious camisole.

Bart Stone ate heartily of his large, rather greasy breakfast and arose, giving tribute to his cigar with little appreciative puffs. In the lobby he recognized the hotel manager but noted indifferently that the manager did not remember him. Among the drummers occupying the rockingchairs that faced Front Street, sat a very old man rapidly twirling his thumbs with an air of interest, even pride, in his dexterity. As his yellowed eyes looked out across his beard they rested on Bart and glittered

with unmistakable remembrance. Steadfastly they waited until Bart's cool glance met them. Then the old man with studied deliberation turned his head. He did not speak.

Passing up Front Street Bart thought amusedly of Old Doctor Essington's rebuff. He recalled an incident of his youth here in Grackleton, when Essington had denounced him vigorously and he had cursed Essington with young rage and impotent rebellion. For the doctor had been to the young Bart a disturbingly powerful symbol of all law and virtue and cant, seeking to fetter fresh, flaming impulses. But that had been before Bart knew Liverpool, Hong Kong, Marseilles, Port Said. This comparatively old Bart, superior because he had smashed fetters ceaselessly, felt for their symbol in the person of the doctor, mere toleration and pity.

He was impervious, swathed warmly in memories of the earth's ends, a vast world that the people of Grackleton could never know. He had touched high and low points, known unbelievable scum and squalor, abandonment, brief gulps of luxury, the deep content of utter idleness, the shedding of old scabrous codes in frank debauch. The poignant flavors of life becoming inevitably insipid, he had made this emergence.

He took politely life's warning that he was somewhat spent, older than his years. He admitted that he was tired, desiring nothing so much as indolence again, a pleasant sleepiness of mind and body. Of all drugged people, he had remembered the five hundred at



Grackleton, Illinois. Moved by no other purpose he had made his devious, unhurried approach and found the place inconceivably unchanged.

On the pop-cases stacked in front of the confectionery, sat red-faced fellows stretching and yawning in the hot August sun. They were eating peanuts and littering the sidewalk with amazingly deep piles of shells. The twelve-year-old among them disdained peanuts and smoked a defiant cigarette. A white dog, peppered with black spots, lay on a torn comic newspaper which rustled monotonously at each of his irritated attacks on the swarming flies.

Bart passed the gauntlet of their curious eyes with his lilting, marching tread as if to gay music. He smiled disinterestedly as they vied with each other in veiled jests at his white canvas shoes.

He savored the heat that rose visibly in blue, misty shimmers above the scorched horizon. The horizon was always present in Grackleton. The eye need only wander off between the old mangy butcher shop and that new, self-consciously alert garage to find the dun sky nipping at the heels of the dun earth.

The hardware store on the corner still bore the letters, *Samuel Miller & Son*, and galvanized wash tubs, enameled roasters, wire toast-racks still showed beneath the decorously lowered shades. Flies crawled stupidly in the lozenge of sun left beneath the shade as Bart Stone remembered they used to crawl on long ago Sunday mornings. Another dog was lying here beneath a plough displayed in front.

He gave his brother's newspaper office merely a glance as he passed it. Naturally Willy Stone had changed nothing *there*: the ancient, specked and yellowed samples of wedding invitations and black-bordered mourning cards, the familiar legend gravely reminding Grackleton that it could get its printing done inside.

As he walked down Front Street toward the Methodist Church, Bart's ironical glances to right and left insolently broke off the dead, thorny

branches of Grackleton and his smile flung them out of his footpath.

## II

He was aware of a languid pleasure in the thought of his dramatic reappearance this Sunday morning at the Methodist Church. He had been here the last night he was in town. He had waited on the peeling steps for Edie Miller. Here on these steps—they were still peeling only it was gray paint this time—here by the door of this same small vestibule. There was an old pew in the vestibule; on it a broken umbrella knitted over with a deft cobweb. A pile of new hymn-books in a neat carton stood against the wall. One book thrust out its virgin green and white from a tear in the paper. A purple silk banner with spurious gold fringe leaned limply in the corner—"Banner Class" it blazoned. It was so proud a banner, meant to stand decently upright, that its post of leaning limply in the angle of the vestibule appeared faintly hypocritical.

Bart Stone could not remember how it all used to look but he dared say little had changed. That messy, muddled footmat of indeterminate brown, scratchy hair—certainly it had always been there. He remembered wiping his feet on it, or one of its kind, that last night when he waited for Edie Miller. Back and forth he had scuffed his feet. He had been afraid her folks, the pompous, stiff-necked, "hardware" Millers, would throw him out on his jaw, he supposed. All his memories of evenings spent with her were half effaced. The scuffing of his feet on the mat was the only thing he was sure about—so many women since, no experience clear-cut, the fine edge of sensation irremediably blurred.

He stood in the vestibule and gazed dully at the footmat. Someone was praying inside; mustn't go in until they got through. He heard the rustle of fans, slight, correct creakings. Whose voice was it? Why, that must be old Hank Safford—he had used his phrases in that swift, breathless way when Bart



was a boy, perhaps the night he was saved and rejoiced over by those who later deplored his godless backsliding. Edie Miller had made the little organ resound loudly that night as a sincere (but cold) thanksgiving for his salvation.

She had always been cold and shy—no, apprehensive. That had been the fun for Bart—watching the Miller crew writhe in distress at his advances; watching Edie move toward him, fascinated, the while she peered over her shoulder at her family's horrified frown. A tall, very slim girl, surprisingly pretty, he half remembered, but what he called pious. They were all a pious clique, the Millers: old Sam, with his thick, red neck and blunt nose; and Clyde, the skinny, sandy boy, with his perfect attendance cards for school and church. They ran Grackleton, the Millers. If they didn't like a preacher or a teacher, out he went.

It pleased Bart to think that they were sitting in there now, self-satisfied, and oblivious to his unsavory return. Knock 'em in the old Kent Road, hey? He smiled, pushed through the doorway, quickly wiped out his smile and walked jauntily into the church.

### III

As Edie Miller pinned her crisp, embroidered petticoat with a large safety-pin at the back of her waist, she viewed a dress of thin, gray silk crêpe spread out on the bed. The white basting threads annoyed her and she wanted to pull them out. But she remembered that it was Sunday.

It was not her dress; she had made it for Mrs. Win Bute. She did not think it a pretty dress. It hung too straight and plain, it was too transparent, the skirt too boldly skimpy. But she liked to sew. Sunday was always dull because she couldn't sew. The girls in her Bible Class were so wriggly and foolish, so hard to manage. She was almost glad there was no Sunday school this month. And now it was so warm she had to struggle against an over-

powering drowsiness at the Sunday services. She liked, however, to pretend enthusiasm for the Reverend Clapp because her father claimed he was tire-some and not quite orthodox in some views.

She pulled her tan voile dress over her head and fastened the snaps of the placket. She glanced into the mirror of the walnut bureau only absently as her fingers worked behind her. It was a tall, sallow woman that the mirror showed: blue eyes that forgot lustre long ago, hair curled in tight, prim, artificial rounds across the forehead and fastened with many visible hairpins into a hairnet above her ears; a scrawny, pink neck circled with a short, gold bead necklace. The voile dress fitted closely about her small, corseted waist. With a piece of chamois skin she rubbed a little talcum powder on her nose and unconsciously rubbed it off again with her handkerchief as she went down stairs.

The green-carpeted steps of the closed stairway led into the sitting-room by what was called the stair door. The room wore a blue rug of stiff, resisting pile, ornamented lavishly with angular diamonds, octagons, and inexplicable totem poles in maroon, green, mustard and pale blue. A bookcase of bright, quarter-sawed oak became a desk when the hinged leaf below the mirror and above the gilt-handled drawers was pulled down; behind its curved glass door books stood in neat rows—"Heart Throbs," "The Winning of Barbara Worth," "Friendship Village," "Gems of Thought from Fact and Fancy," "In Darkest Africa," "A Thousand and One Quotations," "Daniel Webster's Speeches"; the sombre red covers of the Rev. Milton Wesley Murray's Sermons in ten volumes, unsoiled and undisturbed these many years.

Flanking the low, lumpy sofa were two large armchairs of the kind that rock automatically on springs. In one of these chairs sat Samuel Miller. He sat with his short legs far apart, resting his elbows on his knees, his red, scrubbed hands loosely clasped. Chin down in



his stiff, shining collar, he looked upward at a picture of an apologetic stag over the bookcase. He was whistling "Turkey in the Straw" sibilantly, his tongue against his teeth, one blunt shoe tapping out the rhythm.

Edie closed the stair door and moved about the room, gathering up a hymnal, a testament and the pasteboard fan stuck in behind a wall-rack of newspapers and Sunday school quarterlies.

At her appearance, Samuel, without changing his attitude or tune, somehow managed to instill into his formerly contented lethargy an impatient resignation that condemned her as a tardy, dawdling female. He mutely accused her of keeping him, Samuel, sitting in this tiresome position for half the morning; of forcing him to approach the worship of his Maker at an indecently late hour; of depriving him of all other occupation but the contemplation of a stag and his reiterated:

"*Suh-es-suh-es-suh-es-suh! Suh-es-suh-es-suh-es-suh!*"

Edie immediately assumed a studied air of boundless leisure. Her movements, always slow, became snail-like, affrontingly deliberate. She paused in the center of the room to re-tie her slipper carefully. She unstacked the books that were upon her hymnal and carefully stacked them up again. She took up a piece of wire screen attached to a handle and killed three flies with calm accuracy. Her expression was one of innocence and virtuous good humor.

She went into the kitchen and tinkered there at the fireless cooker, even pausing to watch the spout of steam that assured the tenderness of Sunday's chicken roasting within. The fireless cooker had been bought wholesale by Samuel Miller and Son. Grudging as he was of any other luxuries, it was Samuel's pleasure to furnish the kitchen with all expensive patent devices for the furtherance of Edie's cooking. Her antagonism prompted her to use few of them.

When she returned to the sitting-room, Samuel had disappeared. As one who would not be balked in his deter-

mination to spend Sunday in deaconly pursuits, he had set off along the walk. She followed him, making her steps very slow so that she would maintain several obstinate yards between them.

The father and daughter nearly always proceeded to church in this fashion.

#### IV

THEY sat down in their accustomed seat a quarter of an hour before the service began. Edie would only sit there until the Reverend Clapp came. Then she would take her place at the organ.

The church was boxlike with only one adjoining portion, called the "Sunday School Room," where the babble of the unenlightened little ones could be shut off from their more serious elders. A large map of Palestine hung beyond the pulpit platform, and over the varnished chairs, placed there for the choir, a neat placard set forth the attendance last Sunday.

Clyde Miller and his small, anxious wife, Lura, were already in their chairs on the platform. Their son, Archibald, was sitting in the foremost pew, directly facing them, reading over the titles in a hymnal with a learned expression. It was significant of his eight years of Millerdom that he was never called Archie and that he was sitting in a foremost pew instead of back of the hot air register.

The huge hot air register was not merely the geographical boundary line that halted the solemn marching of the pews and forced them to resume their pacing on the other side of its sieve-like expanse. It was the Great Divide. In respect to their voluntary location before or behind the register people were separated into the Sheep and the Goats. In the seats back of the register writhed little boys who had sinister designs on one another's hair and were prolific of saliva for spit-balls; there sat Mrs. Win Bute, she of the dubious trips to Chicago; silly little girls cuddled up to the adolescent authors of their sentiment;



and to the rearmost pew there infrequently came a shambling band of street-loiterers smelling of cigars and the barber shop—Nick Kroner, Dimey Weisen, Nailer Patrick—whose faces were red from hardly controlled laughter, whose eyes roved the ceiling in studied mockery and who defiled the under side of the rearmost seat with gray knobs of gum.

The Samuel Millers sat three pews from the platform, left of the aisle. Archibald Miller habitually perched in the first pew. Henry Safford, gaunt and palsied, a brother-in-law of Samuel's by a first marriage, sat four rows from the front, right of the aisle. Various cousins and uncles of Edie ranged behind Henry. Lura and Clyde Miller surveyed their relatives and the small remainder of the congregation from the vantage of the choir.

Clyde tiptoed down now from the platform and approached his father and sister.

"Well, it's pretty hot," he said.

"I knew it would be," said Edie. "I brought my fan because I knew it would be."

Her voice was the feminine of Clyde's, high, slow and nasal.

"Yes, it's a scorcher," said Clyde. "My thermometer says a hundred in the shade."

Samuel turned his head away from his son and studied the map of Palestine. He was hissing a whistle through his teeth but more softly, and in deference to his surroundings another tune, "Blest Be the Tie that Binds."

"Well, we're expecting you for dinner," said Edie.

Clyde squinted his eyes to express humorous nonchalance.

"You just slip on extra plates, Edie," he said, whispering because the Reverend Clapp had appeared. "Lura says you're not to go to a lot of trouble."

Samuel suddenly looked at Clyde as if he had just noticed him.

"My thermometer says ninety-eight," he observed with finality.

Without answering, Clyde tiptoed

back to the choir and Edie took her place at the organ.

The Reverend Mr. Clapp faced the congregation with his pudgy, determined smile, mopping his forehead in a resigned gesture.

"The choir will sing an anthem this morning," he said placatingly, "after which Brother Safford will lead us in prayer."

Clyde Miller rose with alacrity. The choir was his one diversion from a life of hardware and the maddening, sibilant whistling of Samuel. He expressed his small fund of dreams and longings in this choir and in that expression his tepid spirit bubbled and sent up evanescent vaporings. He faced his unsatisfactory flock as a ballet master might face a dull pupil—with a stern eagerness as if his own meager talent could buoy them up by its mere desire. He cut the air into rectangles with a thick pencil to indicate four-four time, and as he sang a thin tenor his Adam's apple moved noticeably up and down.

Edie manipulated the keys and pedals with a stolid precision, gazing at the cinnamon roses someone had placed on the organ. She did not forget the phrase her brother had insisted *must be pianissimo* but it was apparent that her fingers had only mechanical interest in the execution.

## V

HENRY SAFFORD had concluded.

The congregation rose, figuratively, from its knees and relaxed into relieved informality. Heads turned, fans swished vigorously, hands adjusted ribands and cravats.

At the opening of the door nearly everybody looked about. A man in a gray suit and white canvas shoes entered confidently and seated himself just back of the hot air register. He was a rather bulky man with fatness centered only in a slight paunch and in his clean-shaven cheeks and childishly bowed lips. His eyes had fallow half moons under them.



The deacons, among them Samuel Miller, walked down the aisle, nervously as always, taking little hops to adjust their steps to one another. They gravely thrust the felt-lined plates with long handles under the noses of the people right and left of the aisle.

As Samuel thrust his plate at the stranger, the bulky man looked him full in the face and smiled equivocally, giving a half nod. Samuel clamped his jaws and his seamy neck grew red as the wattles of a turkeycock. Bart Stone dropped a casual coin into the muffled place, still smiling queerly.

In the choir, Clyde Miller watched incredulously. He made little restless movements as though he wanted to jump up and run about the church yelling. . . . The bulky man's odd gait linked him unmistakably to the young Bart Stone whose boldly handsome face had always made Clyde uncomfortable. His laughter bursting out wildly on the most solemn occasions, his easy oaths and facile mimicry had been to Clyde preposterous and rude and vaguely dangerous. And on the banks of Kroner's swimming-hole he would scoop up handfuls of nasty clay and squeeze it into impossibly ugly figures. That would not have been so bad if he had not seemed pleased with them, had not kept them, had not even gravely given Edie a few. (It must have been insulting to a sensible girl like Edie—an indeterminate vileness about them!) That night, too, when he rang Miller's doorbell at twelve o'clock and Clyde had to get out of bed—what difficulty in persuading Bart that it was impossible for Edie to come down! He had called Clyde something and Clyde had banged the door. . . . Stealthily, he put a hand glistening with sandy hairs over his mouth and whispered to Edie, who sat next to him when she was not at the organ: "That can't be Bart Stone, can it?" (His whisper was unfortunately loud and at the name, *Bart Stone*, most of the choir was at once agape and turned on the bulky man a naïve stare, as if Grackleton had become one huge eye fastened on Bart

through a knothole in the towering fence of his unknown wanderings.)

"Why not?" replied Edie.

Clyde's lowered jaw expressed his shocked opinion that her sarcasm was an incident acid. He kept darting furtive glances at her as if he hoped she would reveal some emotion. Her face was, however, quite blank. She, like the rest, regarded Bart, but her eyes were fixed immovably on those large, grayish-white canvas shoes.

After church, people began to whisper Bart Stone's name to one another.

Huge Mrs. Safford steadied her wobbling mass against the pew and spoke with little gasps to Henry:

"Why, that's Bart Stone back there, isn't it? He come in right after you offered up prayer. You know there used to be talk about him and Edie—not that there *was* anything! But she seemed kind of lackadaisical after he left. (And him so wild.) Poor Sam'yl—he's got a tur'ble prejudice again Bart Stone. He may well. A pity Edie had to get stuck on *that* nincompoop!"

Poor Henry trembled so with palsy that he could scarcely get on the rubbers which he invariably wore.

Now occurred a terrifically exciting incident. Those who whispered were so paralyzed that their tongues lay limp and powerless.

Speaking with careless good humor to the older folk who recognized him, Bart Stone took a direct course to Edie Miller. She watched his approach with the expression of one who, helplessly taut, finds himself in the path of a gigantic tree which must irrevocably crash down. She preserved, withal, a stoic poise only that one hand tugged slightly at her gold beads, as if to conceal with that inadequate strand the little hollows at the base of her neck where the years had settled down.

"Well, *how* do you do, Edie?" said Bart, extending a large, limp hand.

"How do you *do*, Bart?" said Edie. "You're the last person we expected to see."

But people about felt the dramaturgy



of it as keenly as if the actors had exclaimed stage-wise: "Edie!" "You!"

"You haven't changed a bit," Bart next lied comfortably.

"You're the one that hasn't changed," replied Edie. She giggled.

Clyde turned away, unreasoningly ashamed of her giggle, and bit at his thumb-nail.

Everyone was, of course, intensely aware of old Samuel, standing immobile at his daughter's side; his eyes were filled with a rage piteously futile and his whole attitude was an inept pretense of ignoring these two who cruelly ignored his pretense.

With what seemed to the watchers a quite majestic daring, Bart led Edie down the aisle and out of the door. The woman was conversing with an impervious grandeur. . . .

Showing the same grandeur of pride, Samuel tramped over to Henry Safford.

"Are ye ready to count the collection, Henry?" said Samuel.

Henry tremulously collapsed into the seat and began removing the rubbers he had confusedly put on. As he waited, Samuel whistled sibilantly through his teeth.

It was stupendous.

## VI

BART STONE sat in the editorial office of *The Grackleton Gazette*. He had pushed back his coat, tossed his straw hat on the floor, and put his feet on the desk as if they belonged there.

Willy Stone, editor of the *Gazette*, sat apologetically at the desk. He appeared much less like the editor than Bart. Willy had accepted the cigar that his brother proffered, asking with facetious pleasantry, "What's the matter with it?"

"An old joke," Bart had remonstrated, "an old 'un!"

He made the lighting of cigars from the same match seem an easy overflowing of the barrier which Willy had hoped to rear between them.

Willy's eyes behind his rimless glasses were nervously seeking to conjure up

some new dam against the inundation of Bart's familiarity. But he felt very small and provincial opposed to Bart's bulkiness and easy-moraled past. It was an inarticulate conviction of Willy's that life was somehow unjust in its insidious colorings—here was he, unimpeachably prudent, industrious and well-meaning, painted into the canvas as an insignificant and pale figure; there was Bart, lazy, sensual, smirched with an unnamable malignance, assuming on the canvas a large proportion and a rich chroma as if that were his assured right!

At first Willy tried to put on a little air of important concern with some galley proofs, but Bart's amused contemplation made him feel absurdly fussy and he reluctantly put down the blue pencil.

"What the devil!" Willy said at last in a low voice. "What the devil!"

Bart grinned indulgently. "You were so damned sure I'd never turn up, y'know. I couldn't resist it."

Willy was alarmed at what he considered unnecessary frankness. In spite of his little irritated outburst he had hoped the meeting would develop into no "scene," would preserve some decent reticence and polite banality.

"Oh, now, Bart," he murmured, "so far as that goes, we—we—uh—are glad to see you, and all that."

"Like hell," said Bart, pleasantly.

He removed his cigar, considered it, and flicked the ashes off against his chair. "Like hell," he repeated, enjoying the phrase.

Willy sighed.

"On the level, Willy," said Bart, "it's a kind of a hollow thing, this wandering around—a man is in Liverpool, say, and he makes a lot of friends, sure, but what are they? A lot of riff-raff that disappear and leave the man stuck to his own undershirt as before. Scum and smell, see? A smuggler of snow here an' a printer's devil there. A job on a cattle ship. Luck at the bones in Hong Kong, say, and a blow for one night with a promisin' chippy. You wake up in the morning and find her



gone and your pants guiltless of the pounds you hoped to squander. Learn about women from *her*! You take to the snow again—"

Willy cleared his throat deprecatingly and worried his cigar with wry mouthings.

Without pausing, Bart's voice graduated into a gentle dolefulness. "And all the time, I say, that man has in his soul the fair image of the little old home town where the hearth fires is burning and friends he loved so dear awaits his footstep. Home bein' where the heart is, you mush back to the well-remembered spot—" his voice broke convincingly.

For the span of a breath, Willy caught at the possibility of Bart being genuine but he discarded it immediately for a less naïve theory.

"I wish you wouldn't—uh—drink a lot—while you're in Grackleton," he said, looking out of the window.

"Drink!" said Bart sadly, indignantly. "It's hard enough to *get* in this goddam country without a man's own brother hectoring him still further. But you've never been a brother to me, Willy, no, you never have."

He prodded Willy languidly, his smile a careless goad.

"Now, see here, Bart, see here—" Willy brought his hand down on the desk with a slap of finality. He faced Bart sternly with a sudden feeling of competence. But the fattish man with his lusciously curved lips, his slumping posture, his thick thighs and limp air of drugged infallibility, cheated Willy of power.

"See here, Bart—" his voice flickered again, died out.

He thought of a fat, sleepy tomcat he had seen once in an alley thrusting its dirty paw into a salmon can and licking off the morsels with an air of quaint devilry.

With a droll cockney accent, Bart was singing now:

Larst week down our alley come a toff,  
Nice old geezer with a narsty cough,  
'E seed Missus, takes 'is topper off  
In a very gentlemanly way—ay—"

"Are you staying at the Parker Hotel?" asked Willy, miserably polite. His sentimental fancy for life as it should be rather than as it was kept persuading him that this was an impossible situation between brothers. After so many years, conventionally he should—no, he couldn't invite Bart to the house. The children—

Fortunately Bart made no answer. His song kept trickling—

'Wot cheer, all the naybors cried,  
*Oo yer goin' to meet, Bill,*  
'Ave yer bought the street, Bill?  
Larf, I thought I should 'ave died,  
*Knocked 'em in the old Kent Road!*

Having finished, he brought his legs down from the desk with a bang.

"What would you say, Willy, if I told you I was going to marry Edie Miller?"

This, then, was his withheld climax.

"Jolt 'em, hey?" He spoke lower and with veracity at last. His confidence was like soot blown against Willy's face.

"I came here, Willy, because Grackleton is the deadeast hole on the face of the earth. I feel like hibernating a while, Willy. Nasty taste in my mouth, see? Sleep it off . . . And then I see these Millers and I can't stomach 'em. no more than I ever could. It strikes me as dam' amusing to get under that thick Miller hide. . . . And so I'm going to marry Edie. Yes, I'm going to marry Edie."

He relit his cigar with a gesture of satisfaction—curved his soft lips around it caressingly.

Willy thought. He had an innate dislike of a row. But it seemed to need saying—in fact it was what any man *would* say—"By God, Bart, you're a boulder if I ever saw one."

It sounded puny. His moment's hesitation had deprived it of impulsive anger's virility. Still he was pleased he had at last broken his hampering cords of politeness and conventionality.

"Of course I am," said Bart, gratefully and sympathetically "You're not such an ass, Willy, not such an ass."

He rose as if at the end of a satisfactory and agreeable interview.



"Good-bye, Willy." His voice cleverly simulated affection.

He went out and Willy listened to his footsteps passing jauntily through the hall. Willy was ashamed because one of his first thoughts had been, "What can he see in Edie? How can he marry her *anyhow*?"

Now he sat trying for awhile to convince himself that he wondered what Edie could see in Bart. But he admitted finally that he did see. He did see. Bart had something he, Willy didn't have—that Grackleton didn't have. Queer, if after all one's dingy endeavor *that* was what mattered—to go out and derive like Bart a—a kind of a flavor, a color, maybe, from things touched and tasted. It was not a philosophy for him, he knew. Still as he looked about the smoky, grimy office it struck him as suddenly very tiresome, a stupid little retreat where you sat day after day because you had a distaste for—for Bart's kind of thing.

He walked to the window, filling his pipe as he looked quizzically out at the dreary, unpaved street: the postoffice where he went at 9:05 daily for his mail; Straub's livery stable; Nick Kroner and Dimey Weisen sitting in front of it staring vacuously at the ground and spitting now and then—potential Bart's. But even Bart's way was better than that—"snow," "Hong Kong," "luck at the dice in—in Liverpool!" . . . He and Bart, diving off a raft down at Kroner's swimming-hole. Bart's stocky, gleaming, boyish, white body. His friendly laugh. They lay naked in the grass in the orchard eating green apples. Talked lazily of childish superstitions and innocuous sex-discoveries. Very much alike then, he and Bart. Yet he didn't think chance brought the ultimate divergences. Deep under Bart's lazy gaiety had always lain an idea that was different, some brutal sense of power, some insane desire to get life under his finger-tips. Willy had humbly used to think this difference marked Bart for great things, but of course it hadn't. He smiled now, remembering how he had envied Bart's

talent for shaping mud into funny men and beasts. Of course that kid trick had only meant that Bart was crazier than the rest of them in Grackleton and that some unchangeable craziness would make him break away to the weird places of the earth.

Willy thought of little mechanical toys, red and blue and yellow men of tin, each pursuing his own jerky circle. Every circle, every jerky gait determined by that inner mechanism. He saw innumerable small tin men hurtling about in meaningless circles, knocking each other down, raucously scraping their red and blue feet against the floor—big circles, little circles—one small, tin man ran down and fell motionless—the others went on—they had to—rasping and tottering . . . in circles . . . in circles.

He brushed his hand across his mild, near-sighted eyes. "I guess I'll go out and get the mail," he whispered, a way he often talked when alone. He smiled dryly at some fragment of thought as he looked at his watch: "9:05—time to get the mail." . . . Little red and blue and yellow men—of tin.

## VII

THE clattering roadster stopped in front of Samuel Miller's tall, thin house. Bart Stone thrust his thick legs out of the car and treading lightly, as if to music, walked through the twilight to the front door. He pushed the button and while he waited, carefully lighted a cigar. First, the faint tinkling against silence, then the approaching click of slow steps within, and the screen door was calmly opened. In Grackleton doors were not flung abruptly wide or cautiously cracked apart to a narrow slit; they swung back without suddenness or suspicion on hinges of a complacent curiosity.

Edie stood wiping her hands on a gray percale apron. Bart noticed that her fingers had the clean, red puckers left by very recent, hot dishwater. She looked at him with level eyes. He felt her tallness more than he had felt the



tallness of anything in Grackleton except, perhaps, this house.

In the sitting-room behind her, Samuel was dozing over the *Gazette*. For that reason she shut the door and stepped out upon the porch. It was a small porch, smeared with many wooden scrolls and curley cues—jigsaw platitudes.

"I've got Willy's roadster," said Bart, pointing to the battered machine by the "horse-block." "He doesn't know it, but I've got it. Come on, Edie. We'll take a little joy-ride."

"My apron—" she stammered.

He laughed and slipping an arm about her waist, gave the strings a jerk that freed them. He took her arm. She looked over her shoulder with a little movement he remembered as she went with him to the car.

It was August and the dying light lay, a faintly golden veil, over the yellow shocks of corn. The road was soft with gray, powdered dust, deep like snow. The car bumped over culverts where little vanished streams had left unguessed legends written in intricate tracings on the dry, sandy beds. A pungent smell stole from the prairie-gum weeds and horsemint and burdock. The stillness of the flat cornlands was sharpened by the see-sawing call of a guinea fowl, the faint rustling of cottonwoods, the shout of a farm hand to his plough horses.

Bart moved his head restlessly, sniffing the remembered odor of Illinois country in August, at dusk. The young Bart had walked out here once at night, and before the silence and stars he had cried—cried because anger gnawed at him and he wanted to smash someone, old Samuel, maybe, and he hurt inside because he couldn't. How young he had been! He was old tonight and sure; he was big now and he knew what he could do. As easily as this he was alone with one of the Millers. As easily as this he was speaking—

He said crudely tender things, things masquerading in coarse endearments. He stumbled, too, almost as if he cared for this tall, stolid woman. And he did

care tremendously for success. He had set his hand at molding a lump of clay in a certain fashion, a fashion quite ugly but dependent on deft, beautiful strokes for the final, perfect ugliness. The irony of this grotesque masterpiece delighted him like the graceful curve of a woman's body. Forcing a kiss with lips he made not too wise upon her untutored mouth, he felt the deep satisfaction of mastery over his clay—all the clay in Grackleton lay before him in a mobile, insensate mass waiting for the deft guidance of his creating fingers.

"I love you, Edie, I love you," he said, dreamily. "See, dearie, see? Say that you love Bart a little bit. Just a little bit. Can't you say it, girlie? Can't you say it?"

She was at bay again, stiffly resisting his heavy arms. With a painful effort she burst the great door of her silence. "Don't be silly! Don't be silly!"

Her voice was harsh and discordant. In the twilight her cheeks looked dark and shadowy from the crimson rush of blood to her face. She stared resentfully at the moon that clung like a frail flake of silver to the sky. "No, I can't stand this silly—this silly—talk. It's wrong, too, kissing me like that."

Her stark hold on convictions so utterly effaced in him seemed, even to Bart, affectingly piteous.

"Why, you're going to marry me, Edie," he soothed her, quickly.

But caught up so completely in his illusion of artistic creation, he could only fall back into his rhythmic crooning, the chant of power, hypnotic like an incantation in which brutalities are sheathed:

"You're going to marry me, Edie. You're going to marry me, tonight, tonight, tonight!"

With shrillness she pierced the insistence of his silky repetitions. She stabbed at him with high nasal sounds that intoxicated him still further with the pleasure of surpassing grotesqueness.

"I'd never do it, Bart Stone, except for my folks. They'd never hear to it, either. If we do, we'll have to, to-night.



And it's just because—they drive me crazy, Bart. They drive me crazy."

Her head fell forward on her thin chest where her hands were picking and fumbling at the cheap strand of gold beads.

At once he was indifferent to her attitude, her words, her meaning. His desire focused now on making her surrender tangible and on the future deliciousness of Grackleton's horror. As he cranked the car he was exultantly aware that life still held sensations for him. As he drove to the next town he sang, happily:

"Oo yer goin' to meet, Bill,  
'Ave yer bought the street, Bill?  
Larf! I thought I should 'ave died—  
Knocked 'em in the old Kent Road!"

Edie said nothing. Only her profile was turned to him.

### VIII

CLYDE MILLER was still up when the clamoring doorbell disturbed his sleeping household. Clyde was sipping a glass of warm milk in the kitchen. He had taken his collar off and his neck looked very long and lean. He wore large carpet slippers that made a shuffling sound as he crossed the hall. The glass of milk was still in his hand.

As he listened to Edie's terse whisper his eyes grew round and fixed. He turned and set the glass down carefully on the hall seat.

"Well, my goodness!" he gulped. "Yes, I suppose you can stay here, Edie. Pa would certainly take it better in the morning."

As Bart came in, Clyde backed away from him like a child from an awesome beast at the zoo.

"Well!" he said again, taking up his glass and drinking excitedly. "Well! My goodness!"

### IX

CLYDE could not understand Edie. She had always seemed to him an open  
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book, or perhaps no book at all—a simple placard with a few words in legible type and a neat border. She had become a palimpsest of scrawled extravagances in a strange language.

In his fashion Clyde expressed this feeling to his father, having first explained the distressing situation.

"Something's come over her," he pronounced in the dry, business-like tone he always took with Samuel; also, he always spoke more loudly and slowly, with a conscious choice of words, rejecting any that seemed to him "too flowery" for the prosaic old man. Before his father, Clyde always felt a bit temperamental, almost a misunderstood poetic type, although with other men he conceived himself as being exceedingly shrewd and practical.

Samuel's anger had not been the less awful because he cloaked it in his majestic reticence and pride. He was a grim, terrible figure to Clyde, whom he seemed unaccountably to hold as the scoundrel in the whole affair. He would not sit in one of the rockers that morning but established himself in a cane-seated chair he carried into the sitting-room from the kitchen. He also wore his hat, although he had expressed to Clyde his intention of staying home from the store. He whistled sibilantly through his teeth, the particularly dreary tune of "Old Dog Tray." Aggravatingly he turned a deaf ear upon all of his son's opinions following the news itself.

Clyde scarcely liked to go away, and yet he liked less his apparent duty of staying on in this depressing room with the clock ticking blandly and Samuel's whistle persisting like the hiss of a tea-kettle.

With rude irrelevance, Samuel spoke suddenly:

"They'll live here."

Clyde thought it a question and said, "Oh, no, pa, they—"

Whereupon Samuel's rage fought through and he thumped his knee furiously.

"They'll live here!" he shouted.



"Well, then," said Clyde, timidly, "you'll live with Lura and me."

"Yes," nodded Samuel, with curious, secret, perhaps martyred satisfaction, "I will."

From that point on he seemed to relinquish his tautness and set himself at the task of being a terrible old man with some apparent enjoyment.

It was at this moment that Edie walked into the sitting-room. She was completely taken aback by Samuel's greeting, "Where's your husband?" Her father's face showed that he considered it an immensely affronting, even an indecent question.

"He wanted to come," said Edie, her chin very high; "but I made him let me—"

"I won't eat him," announced Samuel.

His complacency with himself as an awe-inspiring person was now annoyingly patent. He stared at Edie as if to find in her countenance the exact clue to toppling her from her heights of stoic forbearance; and it was plain in her white, distraught face that she was just emerging dazedly, nearly hysterically, from this first indelible experience of her dun-colored life. But Samuel would give no quarter—there were old scores to be settled. He pushed his hat back on his forehead and looked up at the ceiling, and before he spoke his lips moved as though he were rehearsing something.

"And I find more bitter than death," he quoted heavily and without inflexion, "the woman whose heart is snares and nets—and whose hands are bands—whoso pleaseth God—shall escape her—but the sinner shall be taken by her!"

Edie stood very still and then she made a little awkward rush forward. Close to him she screamed:

"Oh, you're hateful! You're mean! I won't stand it! I don't have to stand it—not any more I don't!"

She flung herself blindly into the kitchen, covering her face to hide its quivering distortion.

An urge to be on virtue's side, or per-

haps some filial habit too old to be broken, sent Clyde to his father instead of to Edie.

"Come, pa," he urged, fearfully, "come on."

Through her fingers Edie saw her father's face as he rose. It was shocked out of its old smug satisfaction. The furrows on either side of his mouth looked deeper and grayer. His eyes—his hard and obstinately blue eyes—gazed straight ahead with a terrified, beaten, childlike amazement. She felt suddenly very sorry for him and knew that she would never forget that whimpering look.

## X

BART's casual comings and goings, his invariable good nature, his fluid habits set in no particular mold, presented to Edie an astonishingly new mode of living. She could not overcome her expectation of male indignation if dinner was not on time. She would start to apologize, pause and giggle on facing Bart's lazy indulgence.

She couldn't sleep as late in the morning as he but she took a truant pleasure in lying abed beside him, recounting to herself the bits of strangeness that life had abruptly revealed. She viewed each strangeness lingeringly as if it were a precious stone—she, whose slow-passing days had each been white-washed with familiar monotony like the pickets of a long fence seen from a car window. She let her thoughts turn over each curious detail with a very slow and careful touch: that large, warm bulk beneath the bedclothes there, that was her husband (she articulated the word "husband" soundlessly); his pipe on her walnut bureau, ashes on the Axminster carpet; his hat stuck up over the corner of that picture of Ruth and Naomi; her name, Mrs. Bart Stone!

They had had to accept him, Lura and Clyde, and finally her father. Their pride in the face of the town had made them accept him. He had set her free of them and in return he had her house



and her money and a place in Grackleton, however grudging, as—her husband. He did something up at his brother's newspaper office—not much, she guessed, shrewdly. She knew he was oftener at the grain office, speculating, maybe. . . . It didn't matter.

Old Auntie Safford, who had used to whisper, "Pore Edie, she does look so lackadaisical since that Stone fellow give her the go-by," she was silenced. All of them were silenced. By some unaccountable chance he had come clear across the world and he had married her. But that was unfair to Bart. He—loved her. To still an unworthy misgiving she had, she would go back to the scene in the church and in the country and trace carefully, hungrily, every word and gesture of his. If her memory cheated her she would think, "No, I left some out there," and return to the hazy part and seek back through the maze for each turn and twist of the circumstance.

Foolish, wasn't it, to have that creeping fear yet that she was tricking herself? But that came from letting herself remember Bart as he had been, years and years ago. Of course he had changed. There were lots of things—uncomfortable things—mysteries about him. Still, there would be about any man. Any man. Sternly she refused to let herself recall a whisper or a look of that slight scrap of youth together. For years she had fought that flaming memory down. Better to forget it even now. She was not young. She had taken him as he was, her eyes maturely clear.

With her inherited pride and that inner fear she had of being somehow betrayed, she had preserved her reticence and the stern practicality of her betrothal night; too, he demanded no abandonments from her—he seemed not to want them. He had seemed never to want them only in those few moments when he asked her. But she guessed marriage was like that. It was considerate in him, really, to act easy and—and indifferent *that* way. She

remembered Lura whispering once that Clyde was very "considerate."

## XI

HABITUALLY prim and circumspect and anxious, the sitting-room had impetuously relaxed into an untidy, careless frivolity. It wore its rug now with an air of drollery; for a smoking stand thwarted the dignity of the spring rockers and the couch made awkward overtures to a bold, crimson blanket with a dubious past.

Fashion magazines consorted with hymnals and religious journals on the table, for Edie had taken to sewing here instead of in her room, or she sat astonishingly idle reading the light "women's stories" and looking at the pictures.

Late one afternoon, Bart tramped over the rustling debris of patterns and colored pages to announce:

"Asked Willy up to supper tonight, Edie."

He stretched out on the couch, yawning and reaching for the ash-stand. The amazingly large "tiger" cat rose from the pillows and stared absently at Bart. He tickled its belly and it purred with furiously loud delight. It, too, enjoyed the new regime.

"Asked Willy?" Edie murmured vaguely, making a hurried effort to gather up her sewing, her spools and patterns. "Is it awful late? His wife sets such a good table—gracious, I don't know—"

"Oh, bull!" said Bart. "Who's Willy? Shoot him any chow you happen to have and he won't know the difference. A little, stuffy, honest, absent, diddling cuss like him!"

"He's your brother," Edie reminded him, evenly, sweeping up the scraps with long, efficient broom-strokes, while Bart watched her with amazement.

As Edie prepared the meal, she had an agreeable sense of handling friendly, well-mannered things. Although she rather wished her new dress were done, she thought her fresh white apron as



clean and calm as those pictured in her magazines. She placed rounds of pineapple or green lettuce leaves with a proud air of daintiness. Half aware of playing a game, she scraped up bits of lettuce and potato peeling from the sink so that her kitchen should continue as neat and spotless as the pictured kitchens. She had never played such a game before Bart came. Before, the work had gone faster but it was distasteful, mechanical, and there was no need to make things look pretty.

Bart liked good food served attractively and she had taken to using the best china and hand-embroidered lunch cloths he admired every day. Tonight she added a bowl of lavender asters to the table. They reminded her that it was fall and the canna bulbs must be taken in.

She mentioned it to Bart.

"I'll do it, girlie," he said, promptly.

She tossed her head with a little supercilious gesture of cynicism. She knew that he wouldn't. It gave her a feeling of superiority to shut her eyes to his numerous shortcomings. It was plain that she did not sanction his irreverent scoffing, his—drinking and gambling. But he did not interfere with her and she would not drop her aloofness even in reproof. Her pride dictated that she must not ask for more than the terms of her bargain—the freedom of being Mrs. Bart Stone.

As she carried the salad into the dining-room she called through the double doors to Bart: "Are all the children coming?"

He burst into gentle laughter without opening his eyes. His heavy body stretched at ease looked luxuriously sensuous and masculine. "Oh, no, no, dearie, not those sniffy brats!"

"Well, Mrs. Stone is coming, isn't she?"

"I asked Willy!"

She turned away, astonished by his calm ignoring of Grackleton etiquette. When Willy came, however, she assumed the little air of triumph and over-

brightness that a woman shows when alone with two men.

## XII

"Got some more coffee, Edie?" Bart was genial, smooth, and pretentiously hospitable.

Watching Edie's tall figure move slowly into the kitchen, Willy felt apologetic, guilty of a pity that could have scalded her fine pride. However it ended, Willy thought that at least Edie would have been released from some of her old, unbending codes. There must be some illusion that would come to soothe her after the crash—what illusion a woman like Edie would grasp he could not say. But at least Bart would have freed her to grasp it.

Watching them, polite, smiling and obtrusively content, as they passed dishes back and forth in the warm ring of lamplight, Willy was almost blinded to his inner knowledge. Had Bart asked him as a tacit retraction of his words in the office? No, it was Bart's exhibition of power, a boast made to mock Willy. Nevertheless, he was unprepared for Bart's conversation afterward.

While Edie "did" the dishes the brothers strolled about the back yard, smoking. Autumn had not come as a melancholy black-robed specter that year; rather as a red-cheeked charlatan who reassured the dahlias and chrysanthemums with one breath and blew faintly sinister gusts of chill with the next. This night was clear and blandly cool with a great, flushed, drunken moon picking its halting way out of a tangled mist to stare through the stark pear trees. The smoky odor of burning leaves was good to smell.

Bart drew a satisfied breath of the earthy air and spoke:

"Well, I guess I'll be on my way pretty soon, Willy."

His suave, almost regretful tone, struck the deeper into Willy's serenity. He could not speak for some time but looked up at the interlaced twigs of the naked pear trees.



"I can't—" he began, "I can't—" and his mouth seemed muffled by the hand of his own inadequacy.

"You can't what?" said Bart, eagerly.

"I don't know. No matter." Willy threw his cigar away. He watched its glow stain the blackness and vanish. "You know how I think. It don't interest you. I haven't any way to get at you, Bart."

"No one has."

"Anything one man can tell another man about life is like dropping stones into a canyon, I guess. The canyon is—the canyon, just the same. Only, the man who dropped 'em feels tired and his arm is a little stiff. That's all."

"I'm different. My stones land on people. And they feel it."

"That woman, for instance," said Willy.

His voice was thick and it trembled. He jerked his head toward the lit kitchen window where Edie moved to and fro.

"Listen here, Willy, listen here. It's not like you think. There's no nonsense about *her*. She wanted to get out of the Miller clique. And she did. And they're a broken, cringing, scared crew. Before God, that's the only reason she married me."

Willy stared again at the figure silhouetted against the square of lamp-light. He drew up his coat collar and said, abruptly:

"Tell Edie good-bye. It was a dandy dinner. I guess I'll have to be paddling along."

He muttered syllables Bart could not hear—"You fool yourself!"—as he took his short, hurried steps across the lawn.

### XIII

CLYDE protested in a hurt, self-pitying way when he heard Edie's telephone message.

"But Lura is leading prayer meeting and counted on you for the scripture reading, Edie."

"Well, you tell her I'm awfully sorry, Clyde. But I'm busy—awfully—it's a dress I've got to get done."

"Yes, but—who'll play the organ?"

"Oh, Lura can play the organ all right, or Alice Branch."

"You know pa'll say something. He thinks you're getting kind of slack, anyhow, Edie."

"He can think, then," said Edie, succinctly.

"Well, you better think it over and come if you can."

"I'll see . . . Good-bye."

As she turned away from the telephone she stood still a moment, nibbling at her finger contemplatively, and then climbed the steep stairs to her room. She was wearing the dress she had told Clyde must be finished. It was not as she had intimated, for someone else but for herself. The hem was only basted up and one sleeve was loosely set in so that her shoulder was half covered. She propped the fashion sketch she was copying in front of her on the bureau.

Before the large mirror she stood pinning the collar together. Then she bent, flushing self-consciously, and searched through a lower drawer she seldom opened. In the picture the white, turned-down collar was fastened trimly with a knot of black ribbon. She searched through the drawer for a bow of black velvet she thought was there. Her fingers discovered a hard parcel wrapped in tissue paper and she drew it out slowly as though fascinated by the thought of seeing a souvenir, deliberately forgotten through the years.

She took off the paper and put the gray, lumpy, mud figures in a row on a chair. One had distorted legs and a great, bulbous nose. Another was scratching his huge ear with an inimitable, goblin-like gesture. They were hideous. But the young Bart had made them.

Resolutely thrusting the memory of that other Bart back from her she still knew that it was somehow linked in her mind with her obsession of the dress. Since her youthful madness for him she had never once felt this concentration, this intensity, that she felt now. As if this dress *mattered*—

Why did it matter? She wanted to



hide those hollows at her throat. She thought the high rolling collar made her face look almost round. And she wanted these things, not from vanity, but that Bart might think her "nice-looking"; as if in this one appeal to him, this overture that tore her pride so painfully, she was at last groping toward all that remained of the young Bart in the so different reality.

It was only in her instinct that this knowledge lived, and so she looked from the squat clay men into the mirror with just a vague conviction of any relevance.

She saw that her eyes gazed back at her, queer and ashamed, hot, somehow, and eager. Perhaps their strange look changed the effect of the dress; for she was disappointed even in her hopefulness, telling herself honestly that she was a foolish, round-shouldered woman who could not hope to bring back her youth just through a new, modish line of sleeve and skirt.

Still, she tugged at her tightly pinned hair, pulling it more loosely over her forehead and ears.

#### XIV

So absorbed, she did not hear Bart's footsteps until he was in the room. She felt suddenly shy and wheeled about with a motion abrupt for her. Her first thought was that she was wearing the dress. At least she looked different. Would he exclaim about it?

Bart caught his foot in the rug and swore. She stilled her reproof before it was uttered—it would be foolish to spoil things that way. He sneered at her, lately, when she made what he called pious remarks.

He went to the bed with a peculiarly clumsy walk. He sat down upon it. Now he was looking at her. Now he would say whether he liked it.

"Well, baby-doll," said Bart. "Well, baby-doll."

What did he mean? Who was he talking to? He was talking through her, not seeing her at all. She had a

swift fear that he was out of his head. No . . . drunk. She had known he drank. But it had never been like this. He was saying things, blurred, inconceivable things:

"An' so that's why—when a fellow's been to Hong Kong—an' it's all riff-raff an' not the same as frien's. Not a' tall, Edie—Willy—I mean Edie. . . . By God, I don' feel right, girly. Rotten moonshine here in the States."

"No, Bart," she said, confusedly trying to get him to lie down. "Lie back like that. Won't it get better if you lie back? Don't talk, Bart. Don't, Bart."

"You don't understan', little frien'," he persisted, solemnly, with meaningless flaps of a limp hand. "Never lie down when you're druak, see? Dancing is good. Fresh air is good. But nev'r min'. I'm all right. I'm *all right*, see? I'm tellin' you about Hong Kong. A man has that fair image of the home-town in his soul. In his soul. Home is where the heart is—nev'r forget that, my little frien'."

She stood hypnotized by his deep, deadly stare as if to draw from it the last dregs of some inevitable calamity welled there.

His thoughts growing steadily clearer, he said, brightly, earnestly:

"That's God's truth, Edie—take it or leave it. You know why I married you? I did marry you, didn't I? Well, say I did—that don't matter. You ask me why I marry—married you?"

"I didn't ask you!" she said, hoarsely.

"Yes, you asked me. An' I'm goin' tell you. I married you, Edie, for the same goddam reason you married me. . . . Take it or leave it, of course," he added, maudlinly polite. "But that's a fact. That's God's truth. I married you because I can't stomach your folks. I did it to get under the thick Miller hide. And it did, all right! It did!" He began to laugh, shaking his head like a manikin.

She spoke patiently and firmly as to a child. "Yes, that's all so, Bart. We married for the same reason."



He nodded pleasantly. "Fine woman. No nonsense about *her*."

"You'd better lie down."

"No, I'm goin' to go now."

"Go where?"

"Oh, I don't know. I've got a ticket in my pocket somewhere that tells where I'm goin'." He fumbled futilely in his vest.

She went to the closet and took out a big overcoat that smelled of mothballs. She spoke with cold precision, flicking a piece of lint from the coat-sleeve. "You'll need this, then. I'll send you things if you write me."

But his eyes following her to the closet had been arrested by the clay figures still on the chair. He stood up with an amazing control of movement, the mechanical accuracy of sophisticated intoxication. As he walked toward her she stepped behind the chair and gripped it so hard that the knuckles of her thin red hands went white. For he had the power of a drunken or a crazy man, by sudden, fantastic gestures, fixed eyes and startling contrasts of tone, to impregnate an incongruous scene with mystery and dramatic significance. He held her now with his eyes as he came very near. He broke the stillness with an exultant, shattering bawl: "Do you know who I am? Nobody knows! But I know!" and at once his voice was confidential, terrible and low:

"*I'm God, see? I'm God. I make things . . . and then I smash 'em!*"

Scornfully, he swept the little clay figures off the chair and ground a few of the fragments to dust with a careless heel.

"I'm God," he said again, thoughtfully.

He took off his hat, regarded it a moment and put it back on his head.

"I'm goin' to go now." Although she would have taken the hand he held out, her arm was like lead and would not move. His childish bowled lips looked hurt but he tried to smile and to speak with elaborate courtesy. "I'll have to say good-bye, little pal. Been a good little frien' to Bart. I'll be back some day. See you again, you un'erstan'. *Auf wiederseh'n an'* all that. Be a good girlie."

\* \* \*

WHEN the door had closed, she lay down stiffly on the bed, wondering why her body ached so. She thought that she must not rumple her dress and started to smooth it under her but remembered that she need not finish it and her hand paused idly at her side.

She felt very weak and cold and drew the patchwork quilt up over her feet, for she was shivering a little. How good that she had never let him see . . . why she married him. She was fiercely proud of standing stiff and calm and strong to the end.

But now it was all over—and she was weak and cold. She meant to lie here a long time and rest. She would not have to get supper . . . what would the other Millers think? She smiled, thinking of their fresh dismay. They—with their little worries! What did they know about life, about *her* life—so deep and violent and strange.

Next door, somebody was playing a waltz. Its gaiety seemed to her quietly sad. She listened with closed eyes and did not shiver. . . . At last she let her remembrance creep back further than ever before, to the other Bart, the young Bart, and there she felt herself curling inside the young arms, the other arms, warm and comforted.





# The Power of The Press

By Roda Roda

THE interesting stranger was editor of a Belgrade paper. He told us the following story:

"One day our police had caught three dangerous criminals. Wishing to get on good terms with the president of police, I determined to make a feature of it, and sent the staff photographer to take the pictures of the prisoners and their captors. Under the prisoners' picture I was going to have the words, *Our most redoubtable criminals*; under that of their captors, *The men who unmasked the malefactors*. But what happened? In the printing office the pictures were mixed up and were published above the wrong captions. . . . The very same day the successful police officers fled the country."



## Invocation

By Kirah Markham

**I** WAS made for love, not longing,  
Cypris rose from out the wave,  
Granting to all lovely women  
Powers no other goddess gave;

And to me down all the ages,  
Nurtured by man's desire  
Have come tenderness and beauty  
Riding on a winged fire.

Cyprian, hear a lonely woman  
Crying to you by the sea.  
I was made for love, not longing,  
Give my lover back to me!





# Répétition Générale

By H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan

## § 1

**T**HE Poor Working Man.—How much does the poor union working man, abused and oppressed by capital, actually work? Let us see.

There are 365 days in the year. Of these, 52 are Sundays. That leaves 313 days. Of these, 52 are Saturdays or half-work days. Half of 52 is 26. That leaves 287 days. Of these, there are New Year's Day, Lincoln's Birthday, Washington's Birthday, Decoration Day, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Columbus' Birthday, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas—all holidays, which leaves 278 days. In addition there are such State holidays as Arbor Day, such holidays as St. Patrick's Day and various religious holidays like Good Friday—an average of, let us say—to put it low—a half dozen. That leaves 272 days. The average human being, according to the best medical statistics available, is ill, taking one year with another, at least twelve days each year, and is then unfit for work. That leaves 260 days. The average working man's vacation period amounts to two weeks or, less the two Sundays and two half-Saturdays already counted, eleven days. That leaves 249 days. A day contains 24 hours, eight of which is the union limit of labor. Eight is one-third of 24, hence the working man works for one-third of 249 days. That is 83 days. On each of these 83 days he takes an hour off for lunch. Eighty-three hours amounts approximately to three and a half days. That leaves 79½ days. Now, it is impossible for any human being to work continuously, without periodic rest,

for seven hours. There must be time to stop for breath, to ease up the muscles, to take the crick out of one's back, to wait until one's helper is ready, to light one's pipe, to wipe the sweat from one's forehead—to do any number of such things. In a working period of seven hours, at least one hour is necessarily so wasted. That means, in 79½ days, 79½ hours—or approximately three and a third days. That leaves approximately 76⅙ days.

The average poor union working man thus actually works just 76⅙ days out of the 365. When you have figured out the percentage, get out a fresh handkerchief and shed a sympathetic tear for him.

## § 2

*The Impending Canvass.*—As an avowed candidate myself, I should refrain in delicacy, perhaps, from animadverting upon the principles and personalities of other aspirants for the Presidency of the Republic. Nevertheless, a voice from the burning bush urges me to discharge my conviction that the Ford boom is chiefly gas—that Henry will blow up, finally and forever, long before the Tuesday following the first Monday of next year's November. Many, I believe, agree with me, but most of them give a reason for their faith that I can't subscribe to: they argue that Ford is too idiotic to make a showing. But it seems to me that the true reason is quite the opposite: that Ford, in fact, is not idiotic enough.

Not, of course, that I desire to under-



rate his talents in that direction. His testimony on the stand in his suit against the *Chicago Tribune*—when he swore upon the evangels of Almighty God that Benedict Arnold was an English novelist and that all history was bunk—was certainly proof of a peculiar fitness for high public office under democracy. It caused, in fact, a thrill to go through the land. Here, at last, was a genuine 100% American; a regular he-man from the great open-spaces; a Rotarian and Shriner *von Gottes Gnaden*; one who, despite all his millions, remained just folks from snout to *os calcis*. And when, on setting up the *Dearborn Independent*, he achieved the miracle of producing a paper even more nonsensical than the *Commoner*, the *Mobile Register* or even the *New York Tribune*—when this feat began to be apprehended in the back country, where men know how to sweat and pray, a glow diffused the enchanted peasantry, and the Ford boom for the Presidency was born.

But the great foe of Tacitus, unluckily enough, has been quite unable to keep up the pace. One-half of his medulla oblongata throbs and hums with the Ku Klux Klan, the Kiwanis Club and the Fundamentalists, but the other half is strangely intelligent. Anon and anon he looses a piece of penetrating sagacity; now and then he even makes a phrase. The weakness is fatal, for all his rivals in the race, with one exception that I shall not name, are wholly devoid of it. I turn, for example, to the Hon. Calvin Coolidge, lately set into the White House by divine intervention, and certainly a candidate next year, however much he may hem and haw today. No one on this earth has ever heard the Hon. Mr. Coolidge ever say anything intelligent. No one has ever even heard him repeat an intelligent saying of anyone else without making nonsense of it. A man chiefly silent, he emerges from the deep cavern of his thoughts only to gorge the land with platitudes. At this art of talking bilge, indeed, he is without a peer in the nation, and, being without a peer, he has the Hon. Mr. Ford by the ear.

## § 3

*Philosophy.*—There is no need for philosophy in youth. Philosophy is age's apology for itself, a soft mattress for its fading and again uncapturable resources.

## § 4

*The Great God Mammon.*—Mammon, they tell us, is a poor God. But is It? Isn't It the kindest, the least selfish, the most greatly contributive to happiness, the most comfortably visible, the most beneficent and most practical of all the gods? Does It not give one power, and remove self-doubt, and cheer the spirit, and give one a pervading faith? Does It not make of life a spectacle of color, and banish fear, and instil in one a great tolerance and generosity? Does It not make one gentler toward one's enemies, and staunch in the face of disappointments, and solicitous of the poor and humble, and bring one to look on the world with more understanding and sympathetic eyes? Does It not make one's family happy and insure ease and happiness to one's children? Does It not baffle ill health and misery, so far as anything can baffle them? Does It not, finally, bring even the skeptic to believe in the goodness and wisdom of another and even greater God?

## § 5

*Biological Footnote.*—One of the unconsidered proofs that acquired traits are not inherited lies in the fact that man learns very little by experience. His congenital character always counts for far more than his experience in shaping his acts. In many important ways, in fact, he seems to be incurably unteachable. He learns little from the lessons of the past, and less from the lessons of the present. For example, a man who has been once seduced into marriage is not less likely to marry again than a man who has so far resisted, but more likely. Widowers, in fact, are such easy marks that the more sports-



manlike sort of women usually throw them back into the water. Let a man once begin to buy Texas oil stocks, and he will keep on buying them until he is in the poorhouse or his wife gets her dressmaking parlor running, no matter how early he receives his first bump. So in politics. Every four years the people of the United States choose a new messiah to save them. They have now tried thirty of these quacks, and all have failed them; nevertheless, they will select another next year, and not only select him, but also believe in him.

§ 6

*The Monthly Award.*—*Répétition Générale's* handsome  $3\frac{1}{2}$  by  $4\frac{3}{4}$  custard pie, awarded every four weeks to the producer of the finest piece of whang-doodle during the period in question, goes this month to the Rev. William H. Robins, of Denison, Iowa, for the following public bull issued after the local chautauqua had staged a performance of the operetta, "Robin Hood":

I attended the show, and my mind is filled with the scenes of drunken orgy and sacrilegious mimicry.

I do not blame the local committee for the scenes of drunken debauch depicted on the stage, nor the actor; I blame the management of the circuit and the head officials.

God help our young people if they have to witness these debasing plays of delirium tremens and alleged comic "amens" under the supposition that they represent the Christian sentiment of the community and are art.

§ 7

*Contentment.*—Of all human emotions that of contentment is one of the most puzzling. The contentment of other people I can often understand no better than I can understand my own. Why should contentment, the glorious harbor of the wearied mind and heart and soul of mortal man that should be reached only with the very greatest difficulty—why should this contentment so often be achieved, as it is achieved, through means of such childish simplicity and with such apparent ease?

Is it because of all emotions contentment is the most transitory, that it is comparatively only of the moment, for the moment and by the moment? Consider. There is no person who, for all his travail, does not achieve contentment many, many times during his life. It is, in point of fact, the one emotion, the one sensation, that he experiences the least trouble with. He may never achieve a woman's love, or a worth-while man's bracing hate, or great grief, or supreme happiness, or the sense of power—any of the emotional satisfactions or paradoxically satisfactory dissatisfactions of life on earth, but contentment is none the less periodically his. In this lies the secret of man's smiling acceptance and endurance of his fate, whatever its nature. In his many little contentments rests life's apologia to him. A letter of pleasant promise that is destined never to be fulfilled, a decent meal with a cigar that burns evenly, the passing smile of a pretty girl, a successful petty swindle, the failure of an anticipated embarrassment to materialize, the mellifluous effect of a couple of whiskey and sodas, a pair of surprisingly comfortable new shoes, the first well day after an illness—in such things, most of them of an obvious triviality, lies the seed of man's temporary complacency and happiness. For the moment he is reconciled with life; for the moment the rags of his ache and worldly disappointment are concealed beneath the ermine of a refulgent mirage.

§ 8

*Penology.*—This new pseudo-science, like all other offshoots of the uplift, is founded upon a false pretense, to wit, the pretense that the object in locking up men in prisons is to reform them. The truth, of course, is that the only object ever visible when a criminal trial is in actual progress is that of getting revenge upon the offender. It may be that the only person who wants to get revenge on him is the person he has wronged, but even in that case the whole might of the state is thrown into getting



the wronged man what he wants, and so, to the criminal himself it appears that society is howling for his blood. If his crime has been sufficiently flagrant and spectacular the number of concrete persons eager for revenge on him is very much larger. If, say, he has robbed a bank, then every banker within a hundred leagues joins actively in the demand that he be punished heavily, *i. e.*, that a savage revenge be taken upon him for his attack upon the security of money. And if his crime has awakened the chronic fears of the great majority of poor dolts and poltroons—if, for example, he has committed a robbery with violence, or set fire to a theatre full of morons—then the demand for revenge upon him swells to a great chorus, and no judge in the world would be brave enough to disregard it. No one thinks about reforming such a man; not many persons, indeed, would admit that he is capable of reform. The one obvious purpose in rushing him to prison is to make him suffer for what he has done—in brief, to get revenge upon him.

Nevertheless, penology tells this unlucky fellow that he is being put into prison in order that he may be rid of his sinfulness and induced to lead a better life, and he is expected to swallow the imposture without laughing, and to immerse himself in contrition. Can one imagine him doing so honestly? Only, it seems to me, if he is an idiot, which most criminals are not. If he pretends to accept the hocus-pocus otherwise, it is only a proof that he is a hypocrite as well as a criminal—that he has learned that professional penologists now rule the roost in most American prisons, and that acquiescing in their buncombe helps with applications for paroles and pardons. Thus the worst criminals of today become the favorite subjects of penological effort, and its chief beneficiaries. The old-fashioned crook who, when the police accidentally catch him, serves his time stolidly and without vain repinings, is now penalized for his courage and candor. Unable to pretend that he regards his imprisonment as a device for awakening his

better nature, and well aware, in most cases, that the *Polizei* have got him where he is by mellowing the facts with perjury, he is punished doubly because he is a realist, and hence cynical of the uplift.

How, indeed, can any intelligent criminal actually believe in the pious bilge that sentimental "experts" in penology now disseminate? If the aim of locking him up is to purge his heart of the desire to sin again then why does his punishment continue to pursue him after he has served his term, and the purging is theoretically complete? Penology has discharged him as cured, but society certainly doesn't treat him as if he *were* cured. Let him run for public office if he has been deluded. Or let him apply for a surety bond. Or let him even try to join the Freemasons, the United Society of Christian Endeavor, or the Elks. He will discover straightway that no one believes in his alleged reformation—that society is still athirst for revenge upon him for his so-called crime. The very fact that he has been in prison becomes a sort of secondary crime; crime is piled upon crime, and the second is regarded with more horror than the first. Consider, for example, the public attitude toward two men, both known to have been guilty of adultery—the one unpunished for it officially, and the other a graduate of some penological hospital, say under the Mann Act. The former, if he ran for public office, would gain as many votes by his lamentable offense as he lost; I could point to specific instances in American history, and refrain only out of delicacy. But the latter would have no more chance of election, even as Mayor of New York, than a Chinaman. Society would make him the vicarious victim of its own evil conscience, just as bank cashiers bellow for a long sentence every time some unlucky burglar is up for robbing a till.

Thus there remains nothing but bilge in the theory that the object in putting men in prison is to reform them; in so far as they ground their work upon that theory penologists are all silly. In



other directions, of course, they accomplish a lot of good—for example, in the direction of ameliorating the vicious violence of society's revenge upon the criminal—of trying to purge his punishment of barbarity. But even in that department, I think, they would accomplish more if they faced the essential fact more honestly—that is, if they admitted frankly that the only discernible purpose of criminal law is to get revenge upon the criminal. Every other purpose is an afterthought. And every one is a fraud.

§ 9

*Governments.*—The technique of democratic government is to impose responsibility upon the shoulders of the irresponsible. The technique of monarchical government is aristocratically to reserve irresponsibility for the irresponsible.

§ 10

*European Memoranda.*—1. French wines have made more converts for France than French diplomacy.

2. The Spaniard is the laziest man in Europe. And why not? What is there for him to do or to worry about?

3. The Italian never thinks. He leaves thinking to his enemies. In this he is sagacious and extremely wise. One by one his enemies think themselves into dire difficulties and so relieve him of going to all the trouble himself.

4. The Greek is the lounge lizard of European politics.

5. In the mind of Englishmen there runs this refrain: The King is dead; long live the Prince of Wales!

6. The trouble with the French is that they knew Potsdam but not Munich.

7. Switzerland is the one country in the world that has never risen superior to its geography. Take away its mountains and all that is left is a New Jersey, full of cheese.

8. One should see Paris only the first time.

9. It is the German's tragedy that he

knows how to handle a gun, but not a diplomat.

10. The Frenchman is the Irishman of continental Europe.

11. The European powers have not been able to fetch the Turk with bullets, so now they are going after him with morals.

§ 11

*Suggestion to Legislators.*—One of the charming by-products of the late war is the doctrine that an alien coming to America has no rights whatever—that he takes on a great mass of duties the moment he puts his foot on the soil of freedom, but that the native population lies under no duty whatever to him, not even the duty to treat him with common decency. He thus joins the *ferae naturae*, and becomes a sort of constructive criminal. So far, however, no suitable general punishment for his crime has been devised. In this emergency I suggest that it would be a good idea to force him to become an American citizen.

§ 12

*Delusion No. 1720.*—It is the belief of most persons that a bachelor has a much happier time of it in this world than his married brother. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The married man's misery is confined to one woman. The bachelor's emotional aches spread over a dozen or more.

§ 13

*Portrait of a Man.*—He is my friend. He favors bloody wars in which hundreds of thousands meet their death, and collects cigar-bands for his little four-year-old niece. He is a champion of the Nietzschean doctrine, and spends considerable time each year in Schwartz's toy store picking out doll babies and choo-choo cars for the youngsters of his married acquaintances. He has above his writing table a large framed photograph of Bismarck, the Iron Chancellor,



and on his writing table a small framed photograph of a very pretty girl. He chews tobacco, and his favorite musical compositions are the waltzes of Johann Strauss. He is a foe of democracy, and politely sees every person, however idiotic, who comes to call on him. He believes and stoutly maintains that one strong enemy is more valuable than two mediocre friends, and then makes friends with the strong enemy soon after he shows up. He is in favor of a merciless autocracy, and collects postage stamps for his brother's little child. He is a rabid anti-prohibitionist and gets a violent attack of heartburn and sour middle whenever he drinks two cocktails. He scorns society, but has his evening clothes made by one of the best and most expensive of Fifth Avenue tailors. He lustily derides golf players, and amuses himself for a couple of hours every afternoon playing with some pet turtles in his back-yard. He champions Germany and the Germans to the full power of his talents, and runs a block to keep from meeting the average German who wishes an audience with him. He writes vehemently against quack doctors, and has tried ten of them in an attempt to get rid of his hay-fever. He insists that he likes only the company of middle-aged women, and associates solely with young ones. He ridicules any man who is vain in the matter of personal appearance, and goes out and buys a new necktie if the ones he has with him do not match

the shirt he is wearing. He is an exponent of the "Be hard" doctrine, is in favor of killing off the weak, and sends milk twice a month to the starving babies of the war-ridden European countries. He is a fatalist, and doses himself daily with a half dozen various philtres. . . .

## § 14

*Observation, No. 6,236.*—It is a great American patriot who is still a patriot after listening to the smoking-room conversation for six days on a home-coming trans-Atlantic liner.

## § 15

*Observation No. 6,237.*—It is always easier for a woman to get a good husband than it is for her to get a good lover.

## § 16

*Three Random Notes.*—1. There is no more absurd critic than the one who coincidentally admires Walter Pater's prose and disesteems mere rhythm in music.

2. Criticism is the art of separating the good from the bad and espousing the cause of the good. Reviewing is more often the art of separating the good from the bad and espousing the cause of the bad.

3. All art is hedonistic.



## No Need

By M. G. Sabel

**D**ON'T worry.

I have trained my memory,  
And now I only think of you  
When it is well to remember.  
Now there is no need of my forgetting!



# Alors, Pourquoi?

By Morris Gilbert

"EVERYBODY'S here but the Russians," said the Major, climbing up on one of the high stools in front of the bar after saluting Bertha in bad French. "Everybody's here but the Russians," he said, "and they're upstairs playing baccarat. They play among themselves principally, but they'll be down soon to sell more diamonds."

An Armenian girl with lustrous hair and stormy eyes poured liquor out of a dimpled bottle into two glasses and set the syphon down beside them.

"That's the stuff to give the troops, my lad," said the Major dreamily, and made the machine sizzle, just a little.

Bertha, obese, her lemon-colored hair piled ornately high and studded with improbable amber combs, placidly knitted on a stool in a corner behind the bar. It was early.

The Major and his friend had strolled up the Grand Rue de Pera from the Tokatlian where they had dined at great expense and without particular relish.

"Bertha's Bar first," the Major had said. "It's in the Jockey Club. Bertha followed the troops into Salonique and made a fortune—officers' bar and a few pretty girls. If you knew Salonique you'd understand. . . . A sink, that's what it is—a sink under a boiler. A miserable pavilion and a row of warehouses down by the water; half the town in ruins—just mud walls—from the fire that cleaned it out; no shade, no sidewalks, no trees, nothing but blazing sun and dust and beggars. When the Serbian relief force came into Con-

stantinople after the armistice, Bertha came, too. . . .

They turned down a side street and climbed some stone steps.

"Here it is," said the Major. "You'll like Bertha. A Devonshire barmaid with Continental ideas."

Already Bertha's Bar looked like the lithographs of "Uniforms of all Nations." A monocled French Colonial commandant sat at a corner table. Two handsome girls were with him. Two young men in Italian blue-gray sat along the bar. At another table was a group of mid-Europeans who wore their caps, with the flat, square crown and a tassel, with gravity. A sprinkling of British subalterns, a couple of French sous-officiers de marine, in their rather shabby and inelegant blue, and several young women, completed the picture.

Bertha leaned ponderously forward and put a mammoth confidential elbow on the bar near the Major.

"Every night," she sighed, "every night there's a fight here. Why can't the gentlemen be peaceful?"

She shook her head.

"Last night," she said, "they had to send up to Taxim for a stretcher for that captain."

The Major laughed.

"That little chappie with the red tabs up?" he inquired.

"Yes."

"Fair enough," said the Major. "He's a sub-moron. That's why they put him on the Staff."

He sipped meditatively.

"Where's Aphro, Bertha," he inquired presently.



Bertha looked at him with a speculative eye.

"She's not here any more," she responded negligently.

The Major did not pursue the subject.

"Melek?" he inquired.

"Her mother is sick in Skutari," said Bertha with precision.

"Nectar?"—the Major turned to his companion—"a lovely Armenian kid," he said.

"Nectar is here," said Bertha.

"Where," asked the Major.

"She'll be here soon," Bertha answered.

The conversation ceased casually.

"Replenish these, Alice," said the Major, pushing the empty glasses across the bar to the Armenian girl.

As she took them it could be seen that her hands were large. She bridled.

"My name is not Alice," she said, articulating carefully.

Bertha put down her knitting and became confidential again.

"You'll fancy the new little Greek," she said.

"You don't say," said the Major. "Quite new?"

"Yes—from the Dodecanese. She just came up from Smyrna today."

"From Smyrna? M-m-m—that's not good," said the Major. "Pretty big port, Smyrna."

Bertha leaned back and scratched her neck with a knitting needle. She turned her head sidewise.

"Doris," she called.

A voice purled from a room behind the bar.

"Ne, Effendim?"

"Heide gelejeksini!" called Bertha.

"Gelejeyim," responded the voice.

A slender wisp of a girl appeared in the doorway. She was dressed in a

white frock, cut square across the breast and suspended over either shoulder by a little silken strap so that no trace of their marble beauty was shrouded. Neck, shoulders, and head merged with an elegance and justness that seemed artificial, it was so perfect. The head was small, the features regular and exquisitely moulded. Gold hair drawn loosely back and up from the nape of the neck revealed little ears. Eyes were large and blue, the mouth was rosy. Doris' expression was mild and ravishingly child-like.

"Baccalum, Doris," said Bertha, and took her by the hand to present her to the Major and his friend.

"*Je parle français*," Doris asserted with a modicum of pride and a typical heavy east-European accent.

"*Tu parles français?*" said the Major encouragingly, but a silence ensued.

Doris beamed without particular animation. Her body leaning against that of Bertha, who slumped forward on the stool, was like a frond against a pillar.

The silence grew a little embarrassing.

At last, the Major:

"*Mon ami est américain.*"

Like a flash Doris really smiled. She laughed a silver laugh of pure joy and bent a seductive and jubilant glance toward the Major's companion.

"*Americain!*" she fluted. "*Americain!*—*O! J'aime les américains!*"

"*T'aime les américains?*" said the Major.

"*Mais si—si,*" Doris cried, nodding her head energetically. Her eyes were electric.

"*Alors, pourquoi?*" inquired the Major.

"*Pourquoi?*" she lilted in high ecstasy. "*O! J'aime les américains parce qu'ils sont ainsi propre!*"





# Mr. Knowles Tires of Sin

By F. Hugh Herbert

I

AT 7 a.m. one summer morning, Mr. P. Sheldon Knowles, barely awake, lay in his bed at the Malvern Hotel, with a sour mouth, and his boots still on, despising himself.

Suddenly the telephone rang shrilly, and he turned painfully to answer it, reaching out a violently trembling hand for the instrument.

"Seven o'clock, Mr. Knowles," came the cheerful voice of the operator over the wire.

"Oh all right—thanks!" he groaned, and, replacing the receiver, returned to his morbidly pleasant orgy of retrospection and self-contempt.

His head throbbed and his eyes were bleary; his shirt, stiff with last night's perspiration, and crumpled beyond recognition, still clung to him, while there was an evil taste in his mouth, frequently compared to the inside of a parrot's cage.

Mr. P. Sheldon Knowles derived a very comfortable living from the sale of electric washing machines, or, to be more accurate, by directing the energies of three bright young men toward that end. His commission amounted to about five thousand dollars a year and his expenses strove to equal that figure, so that he barely achieved a showy, but rather breathless, solvency.

Mr. Knowles was a good sport. He kept at least two quarts of gin in his bedroom, and he carried around in his breast pocket a little red note book containing a very valuable list of telephone numbers. If any other guest at the Malvern wanted liquor or special

service at any of the road-houses, all they had to do was to mention the name of P. Sheldon Knowles and they got it.

He was a sleek, extremely well dressed man, who gave you the impression that he wore corsets. He was often referred to as being immaculate and the adjective gratified his vanity. Outwardly he was immaculate. He always changed his linen twice a day, and boasted of the size of his laundry bill. It pleased him to think that, physically, if not spiritually, he was stainless.

Twice a week Mr. Knowles went out with a girl called Dora. He had had, up to the present, no intention of marrying Dora, and in fact despised her heartily, but he went out with her regularly and, having drunk sufficient gin, became maudlin over her.

Dora was cute and modern and extremely sophisticated. Nine men out of ten would have described her as a peach. The tenth would have designated her a jazz baby. Dora wore, as a rule, one thin dress and one thin undergarment and complained of the heat. Any self-respecting stage manager would have ordered her off the stage for excessive make-up. Her eyelashes were heavy with mascaro and her lips startlingly red. She rolled her stockings and never omitted to put a dab of rouge on her knees.

Her vocabulary was limited to less than five hundred words, the bulk of which were conveniently arranged for her in such scintillating phrases as "Yes, we have no bananas."

Dora was a good girl, if technical chastity be a criterion of virtue. Mr. Knowles found that out very soon.



Why then, the cynic will ask, did Mr. Knowles take her out twice a week and spend a very large portion of his income on her?

It is a pertinent question, and one that Mr. Knowles frequently put to himself. What on earth did he see in Dora? True, she was a lovely little animal, but even the kisses she permitted him were limited in number, duration and scope. Her intellect even Mr. Knowles could recognize as negligible. He did not know the meaning of the word moron, otherwise he would have applied it to her. He despised Dora very heartily, in fact, but he despised himself even more for being her satellite.

He was despising himself now, very thoroughly, as he lay in bed, indulging in retrospective self-contempt.

Mr. Knowles was nearly thirty-five, and, looking back over his life, he was appalled at the mediocrity of his achievements. True, he held a good position, but earlier in his career he had held better ones. Summing it up, Mr. Knowles came to the conclusion that he was a failure—a failure at thirty-five—with nothing to show for his life's work, and no one to care a damn if he suddenly died.

Vaguely wondering whether his assets were sufficient to cover a decent burial, Mr. Knowles began to weep, the gin having been particularly potent on the previous evening. Painfully crawling out of bed, he surveyed his assets—all contained in that little room—a half-dozen good suits, two books (one, the Bible, the gift of his dead mother, and the other, "Jurgen," for which he had paid twenty dollars in the mistaken belief that it was smutty), innumerable framed photographs, a silver cocktail shaker, a pearl stickpin, gold cuff links—the accumulation of thirty-five years. He wept anew, and entered the bathroom.

Half an hour later, spick and span, or, as he would have liked to be called, immaculate, he entered the dining-room of the Malvern and ordered breakfast, though his stomach revolted at the thought. His hair was slicked back

beautifully with a delicately perfumed cosmetic; his pale, clean-shaven, sunken cheeks, with only one little cut, contained just a trace of too much talcum powder, and, by contrast, his lips seemed to be too red, while his eyes, with heavy hollows under them, completed the illusion of a stage make-up.

At that early hour the dining-room was comparatively empty. Such tables as were in use were occupied mostly by children and their governesses.

Mr. Knowles, who had been drinking large quantities of ice-water, and felt better, looked up and smiled at one of the children, a little girl of seven who sat at one of the adjoining tables.

"Good morning, Jean," he said pleasantly.

Jean smiled nervously, nodded in a vague acknowledgment of the greeting, and commenced a hurried conversation with her governess. Frequently she glanced at Mr. Knowles, but whenever she met his gaze she turned away. She had been told by her mother not to speak to Mr. Knowles. All the children had been told not to speak to Mr. Knowles. According to the women at the Malvern he was an unfit person to associate with children.

Mr. Knowles winced, for he suspected this, and was deeply hurt. Leaving his breakfast untouched, he went out of the room and caught the 8:10 to New York. He went by taxi to and from the station every day, a distance of perhaps half a mile, a service which cost him five dollars a week. Why not, thought Mr. Knowles, since he was earning a hundred? Yet he carried not one cent of life insurance and carefully explained to agents that he couldn't afford it.

That night he came home on the train with Mr. Appleby, a young married man who lived at the Malvern, and who was friendly to all mankind.

Mr. Appleby, as anyone who talked to him for five minutes discovered, was the proud father of the finest five-year-old in these United States. Mr. Knowles, quite frankly, was bored from the outset by the recital of Appleby, Jr.'s precocity.

"Know what he said to me last night?"



inquired Mr. Appleby, gleefully. "He said to me, 'Dad,' he said, 'I'm awful glad that you and mother met!' Yessir, that's just what he said, 'I'm awful glad that you and mother met!' Can you beat that?"

Mr. Knowles, obviously, was unable to beat this, whereupon Mr. Appleby plunged into further reminiscences, which continued throughout the forty-minute journey.

Mr. P. Sheldon Knowles, by the time they reached their destination, was of the opinion that Mr. Appleby was a damned fool, and that Junior was a maudlin little idiot. His head still throbbed after his previous night's debauch, and all he asked was to be left in peace.

"And say," continued Mr. Appleby, whose store of paternal anecdote was inexhaustible, "say, you ought to see that youngster take his bath! He has more junk in that bath with him! He's got a boat and a duck, and God knows how many celluloid fish, and today"—he began to fumble with a very angular and untidy paper parcel—"today I bought the little son-of-a-gun one of those clockwork swimming dolls—ever see one?"

"Yeah," lied Mr. Knowles, "saw one the other day."

But it was too late. The fond father had already unwrapped the mechanical marvel and was demonstrating it to Mr. Knowles with the utmost enthusiasm.

Mr. Knowles was glad when the train pulled into White Plains with a screech of grinding breaks. Appleby gathered up half a dozen parcels and stepped onto the platform still talking volubly. They walked to the gates together, Mr. Knowles, sleek, tidy and cool, with a neatly folded, unread evening paper under his arm, while Appleby bulged in every direction with parcels, some of which he had to hold under his chin as he fished in half a dozen pockets for his ticket.

With a nod Mr. Knowles left him at the gate and hurried through the crowds.

"My God, what a fool!" he said to himself. "If that's what marriage does to a man, thank the Lord I'm single."

He turned for a moment to watch Mr. Appleby. Over and above the noise of the traffic he heard a childish shriek of "Hello, Daddy!" and looking he saw Appleby drop all his parcels and sweep into his arms a bright, curly-headed youngster of five, clad in a very clean, but frequently washed, blue linen suit.

For a minute Mr. Knowles watched the greeting of father and son—saw the little boy's eyes shine with pleasure and excitement, and the honest, pink face of Mr. Appleby glow with love and pride. As he watched, the sneer on Mr. Knowles' pale face slowly died away. He remained, hidden by the newsstand, and saw Mrs. Appleby, a slim, slender girl, with soft brown hair, as she welcomed her husband rapturously after an absence of at least ten hours. Three minutes later, the happy little family, wreathed in smiles and all talking at once, piled into a tiny coupé and drove off.

Mr. Knowles stood by the newsstand, brooding. Appleby, he knew, was five years his junior, and probably earned no larger salary than he did. Yet Appleby had been married six years, and had, in addition to a pretty wife who welcomed him at the station each night, a son, a car, a bank balance, and, as Mr. Knowles now remembered with a faint smile, a bath full of childish junk. He was building a home near the Malvern. Appleby had shown him the plans, not once, but half a dozen times. Appleby had things, possessions, tangible things like silver, and lampshades, and book-ends, and books and pictures, intimate, precious things—the nucleus of a home. Also he had a wife and son. Someone to work for. An incentive, an inspiration, an anchor. Nobody came to greet Mr. Knowles at the station every night. There was no childish voice to say "Hello, Daddy" to him. Nobody cared a damn whether he lived or died.

Back on the same old trail of self-



contempt once more as he pondered on these matters, Mr. Knowles climbed into his taxi, his thin, red lips compressed into a faintly cynical smile that belied the hurt and yearning in his eyes.

## II

ALL through dinner that night Mr. Knowles furtively watched the Applebys with an ever-growing envy.

The Applebys were a very ordinary couple who, like thousands of other ordinary couples, were, on the whole, very happy together and worshiped their small son Bobby. Sylvia Appleby was one of those fortunate women who always look as if they have just washed their hair. It was soft, fluffy, silken hair, and in the early days of their honeymoon, Mr. Appleby had delighted in brushing it. Even now, after six years of marriage, he sometimes did so, but it was usually at his wife's request, and it had ceased to be a thrillingly sweet service and became merely a kindly, connubial chore. Sylvia Appleby, before her marriage, had enjoyed the reputation of being a flirt. Eloquent brown eyes, fringed with long curved lashes, a low voice which sounded at its best in a whisper, and volatile, inquisitive hands had been contributing factors. Then Mr. Appleby came along and was such a desirable husband from every point of view, that Sylvia confined her activities to him, with the result that they were married within ten weeks of their first meeting. Now she was the mother of his child, and in the preceding six years of maternity and domesticity she had almost forgotten how to philander.

Robert Appleby was even less exceptional than his wife. He, too, had had several affairs before he met his wife. He was a clean, wholesome-looking man, who took all his views on life wholesale out of the pages of his favorite magazine, the *Saturday Evening Post*. He was fond of using such phrases as "stick-to-itiveness" and "go-getter" and the height of his ambition was to own a Cadillac car. He enjoyed

the cartoons of T. E. Powers and the editorials of Arthur Brisbane. Of the latter he frequently said, quite incorrectly, "Hearst pays him a quarter million bucks a year," adding that in his opinion this was not excessive. He was extremely fond of Sylvia, to whom he referred, jocularly as "the frau," but he did not find it irreconcilable with his affection to be guilty of sundry infidelities to her at divers times when he obtained her permission to spend a night in town with "the boys."

These lapses were always followed by short periods of intense remorse, during which he went without lunches and cigars to bring Sylvia some little gift, and if she suspected him she never let him know it, and she never let it worry her. She knew that in six years she had reduced him to that state of helpless dependence upon her which is the aim of all wise women; she knew that he was devoted to her and to Bobby, that he was honest, ambitious, destined to be moderately successful, and, therefore, knowing which side her bread was buttered, and being very fond of him, she was conveniently blind and very happy.

That night as Mr. Appleby consumed his dinner with his customary enthusiasm, she watched her husband with smiling approval. He was giving her a painstakingly detailed account of his very ordinary day, and she smiled and nodded as occasion demanded, while they both hung on the lips of Bobby and squabbled amiably regarding his diet.

"I wanna have some chops like Daddy does," said Bobby.

Mr. Appleby laughed loud and long, making a mental note to repeat this *bon mot* at the office tomorrow.

"No sweetheart, you eat your cereal, there's a good boy," Sylvia decided.

"Oh, but I do want a chop."

"Let the kid have a bite, Syl," said Mr. Appleby. "Gosh, I'd be sick of that eternal cereal—I don't blame him."

"Oh, Robert, don't encourage him! He *knows* he must eat cereal!"



Mr. Appleby leaned over and put an arm around the child.

"Guess we'll have to take our orders from mother, son," he said. "But we'll go and buy an ice cream cone after dinner, eh?"

The little boy beamed with pleasure and kissed his father impulsively.

At his table ten feet away, Mr. P. Sheldon Knowles heard and saw the little family, and his food lost its savor. He had a table to himself, a fact for which nine times out of ten he was devoutly thankful. Now he longed for companionship; for someone to smile prettily up at him while he recounted his day's experience; for a child to ask him about chops. Hungrily, rather pathetically, he strained his ears to listen to the Appleby conversation. Once Mrs. Appleby put down her fork, and turning her husband to the light, removed a food stain from the lapel of his coat with a brisk, prettily manicured forefinger.

"Dirty little boy," she murmured affectionately as she moistened a handkerchief with the tip of a very pink tongue and finished the job.

Mr. Appleby, who was used to her wifely ministrations, calmly went on with his food.

Mr. P. Sheldon Knowles, who had a date that evening with Dora, envied him bitterly.

He was inclined to be morose and quiet that night, and Dora was very soon tempted to ask the reason.

"What's biting you tonight, Sheldon?" she asked, abruptly. "Been to a funeral or somep'n?"

"I was thinking," said Mr. Knowles.

Dora laughed shrilly.

"For Gawd's sake," she giggled, "don't over-strain the old brain!"

Mr. Knowles looked at her with mingled feelings. They were in a fairly notorious road-house and Dora looked as if she might have contributed to its notoriety. She wore a black dance frock, sleeveless, of course, backless, tight-fitting, and *outré*. Her long, slim, silk-stockinged legs were crossed, and the comeliness of her

knees was no longer a matter of speculation. She held a cigarette in her mouth, and from time to time she sipped a cocktail. She looked beautiful, for, in the strong light of the road-house, her excessive make-up seemed more in place. Her tiny hands beat a nervous tattoo on the white tablecloth, and her slim, lovely shoulders swayed in rhythm to the music.

Mr. Knowles, who until tonight had never dreamed of matrimony in connection with Dora, now tried to picture her as his wife. She was far prettier than Sylvia Appleby—far prettier and far younger. He wondered how she would look in a house dress or in anything simple. He always saw her when she was dolled up. He tried to picture her with a baby—his baby—his son. Above the babel of voices and the clatter of crockery, he heard a childish treble saying "Hello, Daddy." To have a home, a wife, a child, to have things—*things*—that would be sweet—

He stared at Dora, and, automatically drank one cocktail after the other. They danced once or twice, and as Dora's warm, slender body curved in his arm, and her sparkling eyes laughed into his, his thoughts raced ahead—why not marry Dora?—save up—rent a little apartment—later buy a little home—perhaps a car—

He held her to him very tightly, and his heart beat faster. He was sick of bumming around in this fashion—living at a hotel—with a semi-weekly petting party the only outlet for his affections. Why not marry Dora? He came to a sudden decision.

"I'm hot," he declared. "Let's go for a ride."

"No, let's dance a little longer," she objected.

"I don't feel like dancing—I'm not in the mood."

"Say, what's the *matter* with you anyway?" she asked irritably.

"I don't know," he said pensively, "I'm in a queer sort of mood."

"Well for heaven's sake snap out of it!" she advised curtly.



They danced once more and then she allowed herself to be led to a taxi.

"Drive around for an hour or so," he instructed the chauffeur as they climbed into the car.

Mr. Knowles had had just enough liquor to make him sentimental. Two more cocktails and he would have been a very different and a very much wiser man. It is not when he is drunk that a man makes a fool of himself, only when he is getting drunk.

"Now Sheldon," warned Dora at the outset of their ride, "no rough stuff, please!"

A look of pain spread over his face. He made no effort to embrace Dora. Instead, he took her hand.

"Dora," he said, and then after a long pause, "I've been thinking—"

"Yeah—so you said before," she prompted mockingly.

"Listen, Dora," he said, suddenly, rather fiercely; at first haltingly, and then in a rush of words, "listen, Dora—I've come to the conclusion I'm a damned fool. Here I am—thirty-five, and what am I? Nothing. Thirty-five and what have I? Nothing—not a damn thing. Listen—I'm sick of drifting around like I do. I want to settle down—I want to have a home. I can still make something of myself—listen, Dora, I guess I love you—I don't know much about love—but—well, I guess I do love you, because I've always been glad that you were on the level—see what I mean? And say, listen, Dora, I'll make something of myself yet, Dora, honest I will—I can—there's no reason why I shouldn't. I'm as clever as Appleby any day."

He paused for a moment to look at the effect of this outburst upon Dora. She was staring at him, fascinated.

Blindly he blundered on, telling her of his dreams and his ambitions, dragging forth into the light of day faint hopes and brave thoughts, mildewed by years of neglect. And all the time he fondled her moist, warm, little hand as he talked, and never attempted a more intimate caress, as if conscious that in that shabby taxi with its two

rather tawdry occupants, there had entered something rather fine, something far bigger than himself, bigger than Dora, bigger than both of them—Love.

The voice of Dora brought him back to earth.

"You're cuckoo—absolutely cuckoo—Why Sheldon, I prefer you when you're plain stewed and mushy."

In a flash the moment had passed. He released her hand and ordered the driver to go home. Dora was right, it was a crazy idea—and yet, it would be sweet to have those things he had figured on—that home—and having someone to meet him at the station—and things—*things*.

That evening alone he had spent almost thirty dollars. On what? An indifferent dinner, undeniably bad liquor, the privilege of dancing in a crowded and overheated road-house, and taxis. Thirty dollars! One could buy books or pictures for a house with that—chairs even—an ice-box—things for a home—things, possessions, belongings. His eyes filled with burning tears. He wanted things, he was sick of isolation. The girl who had shattered his dreams dozed peacefully in her corner of the taxi, glad that he did not, as usual, maul her about. She said good night sleepily, through barely parted lips that breathed of gin.

Mr. P. Sheldon Knowles went straight up to his room, and for a long time before getting into bed, he paced up and down, taking stock of himself. He tried to read "Jurgen," but could make nothing of it. What on earth was it all about anyway? And what in hell was a hamadryad?

"Oh, damn!" said Mr. Knowles, irritably and threw the book away. There remained the Bible, but apparently this was also unequal to soothe the turmoil in his breast, for, after a minute he put it aside with a repetition of the expletive.

He began to undress, with a savage scowl on his face which he admired in the mirror facing his bed.

"I wish to God I'd got decently drunk," muttered Knowles as he



climbed into bed, " 'stead of making a damn fool of myself."

### III

THE following day being Sunday, Mr. Knowles had breakfast sent up to his room and did not make his appearance downstairs until about one. In faultlessly creased white flannel trousers, white, buckskin shoes, and a well cut, or, to be more precise, too well cut dark blue coat, he looked more like a chorus boy in the first act of a musical comedy than ever. He took a seat on the porch and lit a cigarette.

Presently Mrs. Appleby came out and took the seat next to his with a smiling, gracious greeting. She was one of the few women at the Malvern who ever spoke to him. He inquired after the others.

"I'm a widow today," she answered brightly. "Mr. Appleby drove Bobby over to Long Island, but I didn't feel up to it."

"And how does it feel to be a widow?"

"Well, I suppose it would be smart to say that it's rather a relief, and all that," she answered him seriously, "but actually, I miss them horribly, even if they're only gone a few hours."

Mr. Knowles looked into her eyes steadily, trying to divine whether he might find sympathy there. The mood of the previous evening still persisted, and here was someone who lived in the midst of things—the things he wanted, and lacked—here was a wife, a mother.

"Mrs. Appleby, don't misunderstand me, please," he said slowly, "but I envy Mr. Appleby from the bottom of my heart."

She smiled prettily.

"Is that a compliment—or a confidence?" she asked.

"Both," he answered, and, encouraged by her smile, he went on to expound his theme.

"You've lived here several months," he concluded, "you know what the women here say about me. They say

'There's that drunken beast, Mr. Knowles,' and they tell their children not to come near me. Oh, I know—I've heard 'em. You've probably said so to Bobby yourself—and they're right—I *am* no good. I am more often drunk than not. I *am* a failure! Look at me! I'm thirty-five—and where am I? What have I got to show for my life? I wish to God I were married!"

For ten minutes he rambled on, resigning himself with a happy fatality to the tide of self-pity.

"Then why *don't* you get married?" inquired Mrs. Appleby.

He laughed mirthlessly.

"I run around with a girl called Dora. You've probably seen her—she's—"

"She's lovely," Mrs. Appleby interrupted.

"Yeah—and dumb," he continued, "last night—I was—well, I wasn't quite stewed, but I was sort of sentimental, know what I mean, and I asked her to marry me."

"And what did she say?"

"She said I was cuckoo—and I guess she was right at that!"

"Were you very much in love with her?"

"Yes—no—I dunno—I like her. She's cute. I like to be with her—but I know now that she's not the wife I need. You know, the sort of woman I could love would be someone—someone who hadn't had much—much of anything—love, clothes, money—so that she'd appreciate what I could give her. I really dunno what I want—and I don't know why I'm telling you all this. It's mighty good of you to listen."

He trailed off into silence.

Mrs. Appleby was thinking quietly; like every woman she was a born match-maker.

Mr. Knowles, are you really serious about—about what you've told me?"

"Absolutely."

He wondered what she was driving at.

Well, then, if you come with me this afternoon, I'll introduce you to a



perfectly lovely girl—just the right girl for you! I'm going there anyway for tea, so you can just come along!"

#### IV

THAT afternoon at about four, Mr. Knowles was introduced to Pauline Phelps. By six he had decided that she was the most desirable woman on God's earth.

Miss Phelps was thirty, but unlike most women of that age, she did not try to look like twenty-four. She had big lustrous blue eyes, with myriads of fine lines at the corners, and masses of copper colored hair, while her small, pleasant face was covered with tiny freckles. She came from Alabama and had a low, drawling, very attractive voice. She was staying with a cousin of Sylvia Appleby's with whom she had once gone to school, and Sylvia had met her on several occasions previously. On one of these occasions, Pauline had said jokingly, "Mrs. Appleby, why don't you find me a husband as nice as yours?"

Wherefore Sylvia brought Mr. Knowles to tea, much to the excitement of the Malvern gossips who saw them leave the hotel together.

They spent a very enjoyable few hours and Mr. Knowles was easily induced to stay for dinner. Sylvia talked to her cousin while Pauline entertained Mr. Knowles. She evinced a very flattering interest in the sale of electric washing machines, and, when that subject was exhausted, agreed with him that Prohibition was a farce, and that America was very shrewd in deciding not to become involved in any foreign squabbles. Mr. Knowles, who had an excellent memory, gave further views on current banalities in the form of verbatim quotations from leading editorials.

"How well you put things, Mr. Knowles," said Pauline from time to time, and studied him with keen, kindly eyes. Was this the man Sylvia Appleby has promised to bring her?

When they were all helping to pre-

pare dinner, Pauline took Sylvia aside.

"Who is he?" she asked.

"My dear, I think he's a very nice man," Sylvia began, defensively, "and I know he wants to marry, because he confided in me this morning. I thought I'd bring him along, anyway. Robert tells me he makes a hundred dollars a week," she added after a short pause, and busied herself over the preparation of a salad dressing.

"What do you think of him?" she asked finally.

"He seems very nice," drawled Pauline. "The point is, rather, what do other people think of him?"

"Well," Sylvia confessed, "at the Malvern he has the reputation of being rather dissipated—and I must say he *does* step out pretty frequently, but I don't believe he enjoys it a bit. I think he is very pathetic—he envies Robert bitterly, so he was telling me this morning. . . ."

Skilfully and subtly Sylvia made of him a figure of pathos and romance, enlarging upon his virtues of which she knew nothing, and minimizing his vices, of which, by hearsay, she knew a considerable amount.

Pauline began to be quite interested.

After dinner, when Sylvia was dragged upstairs by her cousin to examine and pass judgment upon some newly acquired dresses, she sat on the couch in the parlor with Mr. Knowles and drew him out.

P. Sheldon Knowles was of a type which responds very easily to such a process. He was intensely susceptible to environment. In a cabaret, with Dora, he felt hard-boiled, cynical and vicious and despised all domesticity; in a church (he was an occasional Catholic) the music, the incense and the picturesque ritual, all combined to sweep him upward into a very exalted but transitory frame of piety; now, in this pleasant living room, soothed by the low, musical voice of the pretty woman next to him and surrounded by tasteful, intimate, homelike things, the *lures et penates* that were missing in his life, and for which vaguely he craved,



his whole heart yearned for sympathy. For the third time within twenty-four hours, he told haltingly of his dreams and ambitions and as the recital of them grew more familiar he added little touches, ingenuous and sincere. With a sadistic delight in mortifying himself—the self he had indulged and loved—he stripped himself of every pretense and revealed himself to Pauline as a very shoddy, shabby soul, conscious of his rottenness, and groping vaguely for something fine. . . .

As he talked he marveled at himself that he should be telling all this to a perfect stranger after knowing her for a couple of hours. With Dora he had had the excuse, firstly, that he was intoxicated, and, secondly, that he knew her rather intimately, and with Sylvia Appleby he at least had the excuse of a three-months'-long acquaintanceship. But Pauline he had met but two hours previously. . . .

Pauline listened, half-fascinated and half-disgusted. Her limited study of psycho-analysis enabled her to recognize as fine a sample of an inferiority complex as she could conceive. She tried to picture herself married to this abject creature. Could she give him the fine things toward which he displayed an inclination to blunder? Could she raise him to her level or would he drag her down to his?

Pauline was universally described by those who knew her well as a very lovely girl. The adjective was applied to her personality though she was also physically attractive. Understanding she had, and tolerance, and she was utterly, often painfully, genuine. Her work as the welfare superintendent of a large candy factory in Mobile, brought her into contact with hundreds of girls of every type and they all worshiped her. She had never been engaged. Nobody knew why. Men seemed to like her, but they never made love to her. As the years went by and her first youth receded, Pauline, hurt, bewildered and uncomprehending, remained single, while all around her the immature, frivolous Doras of this

world were courted, married and had children. But her disappointment was well concealed. The vast majority of her friends believed she remained single by her own choice.

When she had jestingly asked Sylvia Appleby to find her a husband, the remark had been merely a pleasantry and a compliment to Robert. She had never supposed for a minute that Sylvia would take her seriously.

She studied Mr. Knowles again and mentally analyzed him as she would have tabulated the qualifications of a girl applying to her firm for work.

Appearance—trim, unhealthy, unnatural. Well, his acknowledged excesses explained the last two. Mentality—very ordinary, but with aspirations that were not unworthy. Education—typically mediocre. His speech showed a meagre vocabulary and rather distressing notions of grammar. "I hadn't ought to have went," said Mr. Knowles, referring to a debauch which, against his better instincts, he had attended.

Was this a possible candidate for her hand?

The voice of Mr. Knowles interrupted her reverie.

"You know it's not too late," said Mr. Knowles, wistfully for the third or fourth time, "I could still make something of myself—of course I know I'm a failure now, but I could. . . ."

Pauline was touched. She decided to give him a chance.

## V

IN THE following weeks Mr. Knowles visited Pauline Phelps frequently. Sylvia Appleby was thrilled.

"My dear," she told her husband, gleefully, as she watched him shave one morning, "I believe I've done a good deed!"

"Yeah," said Robert, "thass fine! I wish you would do me a good deed, honey, and buy me some more shaving cream tonight!"

"You're not a bit interested," Sylvia pouted.



Mr. Appleby stopped in his shaving to admire his wife. She was still in bed sitting up with slim arms clasped round her knees and her soft hair falling in a chestnut cascade over her shoulders. Even after six years the charming novelty of their legalized impropriety had not altogether worn off.

With lather all over his face, Mr. Appleby came over to kiss his wife.

"Of course I'm interested, honey," he assured her. "What's the good deed about, huh? Shoot!"

Sylvia began to unfold the tale of her benevolent activities in behalf of Mr. Knowles.

"It's too wonderful," she crowed. "They're both crazy about each other—and Mr. Knowles is cutting out all his—well, you know—drinking and women and gambling and everything, and I believe they'll be frightfully happy!"

Mr. Appleby frowned. Here was a situation which called for a man's firm action.

"Say, listen, honey," he said sternly, "for God's sake don't go interfering in other folks' affairs! You don't know a darn thing about Knowles and all you know about Miss Whatsaname is that she's your cousin's friend! You're just as sweet as you can be trying to fix things up for them two birds, but you're just asking for trouble! For the love of Mike, cut it out! I don't want you to mix yourself up with anything—you never know—"

"But, Robert," Sylvia protested, "Mr. Knowles is really a *nice* man—I've had *heaps* of long talks with him—and Pauline—"

"Well, don't have any more long talks with him, thass all I've got to say, and I know what I'm talking about!"

"Rubbish—I shall talk to him as much as I want to!" said Sylvia. "Just because all the old cats say he's this, that and the other thing, is no reason why the poor man should be ostracized—you know what I mean."

"I tell you you're to cut it out," said Robert, heatedly.

Sylvia drew the bedclothes around her and turned toward the wall.

"You forget to whom you're talking," she said frigidly.

Mr. Appleby finished dressing in silence and went in to breakfast.

He walked to the station with Mrs. Russell, a very chatty soul and one of the few women at the Malvern who was in business and therefore commuted. He determined to sound her out regarding Mr. Knowles, of whom he really knew very little, and soon steered the conversation round to him.

"Decent sort of fellow," he ventured, "I rather like him."

"Why, yes—I like him too," agreed Mrs. Russell, "and Mrs. Appleby seems to have taken quite a fancy to him! Poor man, he was always on the fringe of things, as it were, and I think he's so grateful!"

"Is that so?" said Mr. Appleby, and lapsed into silence.

## VI

For ten days now Mr. P. Sheldon Knowles had not touched a drop of liquor, and the violent trembling of his cigarette-stained hands testified to the havoc this heroic denial was making on his nerves. Coincident with this noble resolve, his employers noted a falling off on the sale of electric washing machines, and his salesmen, who suffered vicariously, grumbled and complained to the president of Mr. Knowles' vile temper.

Dora had rung him up half a dozen times to ask what was the matter. In her cheap, shallow way she was fond of him.

"I'm not going to see you any more," he told her finally. "What's the use?" He slammed down the receiver.

Almost every night he saw Pauline. He was doing things at her suggestion—things that he had never supposed he would do. He was taking exercise in a gymnasium—Mr. P. Sheldon Knowles, stripped to the waist, permitted a perspiring professor of pugilism to pummel him until every rib



hurt. He was reading—not magazines, but books, and not fiction at that. He had just struggled through Wilde's "De Profundis." He knew, of course, that Wilde had been imprisoned, but he thought "De Profundis" poor entertainment. Pauline had also given him a book of poems, an old-fashioned anthology, and a crazy book for kids called "Alice in Wonderland." He read this without a smile, and marveled that a girl of Pauline's intellect should find it, as apparently she did, excruciatingly funny in parts. For himself he much preferred the homely, vulgar humor of "Bringing Up Father."

The most curious feature of their friendship was the tacit assumption from the very beginning of its ultimate outcome. There was never a word spoken, but Pauline knew perfectly well that Mr. Knowles was merely waiting for a sign from her, and he knew, that, to all intents and purposes, he was on probation. If he could make the grade, Pauline would have him. Only one reference had they made to it.

"You know," said Pauline, one afternoon as they returned from a matinee, "I think it's awfully fine of you—to pull yourself together like this."

He looked her full in the eyes.

"You know why I'm doing it," he said, quietly.

## VII

THAT evening when he reached his room at the hotel, he found a note from Dora, an affectionate, childish note, a strange mixture of ingenuous artlessness and worldly sophistication. With singular lack of subtlety, Dora enclosed the latest snapshot of herself taken on the beach in a one-piece bathing suit.

Mr. Knowles sat on his bed with his head in his hands staring at it. He contrasted Dora and Pauline—Dora, all soft curves, easily accessible, a vulgar, painted, mercenary little flapper, but accessible—and on the other hand, Pauline, remote, chaste, kind, cultured,

a woman to worship. Did he worship her? Rather he worshiped that which she stood for—decency, gentleness, refinement, tenderness—and the things by which she was surrounded, and could surround him—things, possessions, belongings, things that she would make with her own hands—for her home—his home—their home—

He looked at Dora's picture again and groaned. Dora was cute. Her body was warm and soft and sometimes when she felt affectionate she liked to be cuddled. He could never picture himself kissing Pauline—much less cuddling her. Could Pauline ever submit to his caresses? His thoughts began to grow confused. Where was he drifting? Was he making a colossal fool of himself? Perhaps Pauline was laughing at him? Thirty-five—and he had nothing—nobody—wasn't he too late? Could he be happy with Pauline? Could he make the grade? Thirty-five years wasted—and supposing he lost his job? What would they live on? Responsibilities—expenses—such a strain to live up to the standards he had set—To read poetry—he didn't understand a tenth of it—Someone to meet him at the station—that would be sweet—and a little boy to say "Hello, Daddy"—a house, furnishings, things, things. . .

Suddenly the telephone rang shrilly.

He picked up the instrument.

Dora, deserted by her best meal ticket, was coaxing.

"Oh, Sheldon—what's the matter? Please won't you let me see you? I'm afraid you're hurt, Sheldon, and I'm most terribly sorry if I hurt you! Sheldon, I'm so lonesome for you—I miss you just—*terrifically*—Sheldon, please!"

He moistened his dry lips.

"Oh Dora, what's the use?" he asked, pitifully.

His eyes strayed from the table with its neat pile of books suggested or loaned by Pauline to the carpet where lay the little snapshot of Dora in her swimming suit.

"Why, Sheldon—we can be the best



of pals—honest, we can! Oh, I'm so lonesome, Sheldon, and—and I want to be loved a little—Oh, Sheldon, I want you to put your arms around me—and kiss me—”

He was trembling now, and his breath was labored. Two things he wanted at that moment more than anything on earth—liquor—and Dora. He had seen neither for nearly two weeks.

Once more he looked at the little pile of books—and then—

“All right,” said Mr. Knowles, “I’ll be along in half an hour. . .”

A gurgle of delight greeted the concession.

“And wear that black dress without a back,” he added.

\* \* \*

At that moment, not a mile away, Pauline sat on the porch, sewing, her copper-colored hair glowing in the lamp-light. She was dreaming of the future—a future which included P. Sheldon Knowles—and she was very proud that her influence in two short weeks had changed him so much for the better. She smiled tenderly as she recalled his constantly expressed yearn-

ings for things—things. . . Slowly, making each stitch a benediction, she sewed on her first gift to him—a pretty but quite useless folder for his ties—and a tender smile played about the corners of her mouth. She sewed until late into the night, and was still working when, way after midnight, Mr. Knowles was assisted up the steps of the Malvern by the colored porter and put to bed.

## VIII

AT TEN the next morning, Mr. P. Sheldon Knowles, with a sour mouth and his boots still on, lay in his bed, despising himself. His eye fell on the little pile of books given him by Pauline.

“Aw—hell—what’s the use,” thought Mr. Knowles, and the ready tears flowed. What was the use—thirty-five and he had nothing—was nothing, never would be anything—just a little better than a bum—no home—nobody to love him—no books—pictures—things—things. . .

He wept bitterly, being still very pie-eyed.



## Gray Days, Golden Days

*By Thomas Moulton*

A GRAY day on the moorland, and a gray day in the dale,  
The spirit of a stricken year in the moaning of a flail;  
A mist that makes the oxyard a gray wet world apart . . .  
And yet the day is golden in a gray old heart.

June sunlight in the oxyard, and a merry milking song,  
Diamonds on the duck-pool where the thirsty cattle throng.  
Young laughter down the white road that led men to the years . . .  
And yet the day is dimming in a mist of tears.





# Americana

By Major Owen Hatteras, D.S.O.

## I

### California

**P**ROGRESS of human freedom in California, as revealed by a United Press dispatch from Los Angeles:

Taking a straw vote is the latest offense for which a man may be arrested in Los Angeles.

R. W. Borough, reporter for the Los Angeles Record, was arrested by Officer W. E. ("Zero") Townsend for taking a straw vote in Pershing Square.

Three men Borough had stopped to ask regarding their choice for next president of the United States also were arrested.

Townsend is the professional witness against the I. W. W. who has testified in numerous trials throughout the State.

Borough and the three men were bound over for jury trial.

## II

### Colorado

GLAD tidings conveyed to the people of Colorado Springs by the Rev. T. B. Westbrook, a favorite divine of those parts:

The last generation of men are now upon the stage of action, and many now living will see Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven.

No man knows the day or year of His coming, but the signs in the sun, moon and stars together with the distress of nations, capital and labor struggles, terrible storms and other disturbances in nature fulfil the predictions of Christ's sermon in Matthew 24, where He said, "When ye see all these things come to pass, know that He is near, even at the door. Verily, I say unto you this generation shall not pass away."

## III

### Georgia

EVIDENCE of a revival of affection for the Ethio in the home of the Ku Klux

Klan, as revealed by a news dispatch from Atlanta:

An effort to check the migration of negroes was given by the authors as the reason for the introduction of a bill in the Georgia Legislature which will make it a felony for any person or concern to solicit labor in Georgia for other States. Punishment will be a prison term of not less than three years nor more than seven.

## IV

### Kentucky

NOTE on moral progress among "the only pure Anglo-Saxons in America," from an uplifting magazine called *Work and Hope*:

No epidemic. Only a community of five thousand normal people, farmers of the Kentucky hills, who used 110,044 grains of morphine in 18 months.

Two hundred ounces of morphine sold by a Main street druggist in a town of five thousand inhabitants. In 1921 the Bellevue and allied hospitals to which all New York's accidents and emergency cases go used only 92½ ounces for the treatment of 64,103 patients. And the twenty-seven principal hospitals of Philadelphia absorbed only ninety ounces of morphine.

That is about one-third of the amount absorbed by the men, women, and children of Somerset, Kentucky.

## V

### Massachusetts

FROM an address delivered before a chautauqua at Laurel Park, Mass., by Edward E. Whiting, a member of the staff of the estimable Boston Herald:

The motive that sends most men into public life as a career, such as a seat in Congress, is because they want to do something for



their country; they have a fervent desire to be part of the works that make up our great country.

## VI

## Michigan

RESOLUTIONS passed by the embattled Lutherans of the state, in congress assembled at Detroit:

We believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God, whose inerrancy, not only in matters of doctrine, but also in every other statement, no matter to what field of knowledge it refers, is unquestioned. We most heartily disapprove, therefore, of all recent and present endeavors to eliminate from the sacred records such things as men are alleging to be inconsistent with facts in any department of human knowledge.

We represent a sound Lutheran fundamentalism in upholding, not only a few of the basic principles and doctrines of the Bible, but all of them, from Genesis to Revelation, no matter whether in so-called conformity with our reason or not. We very decidedly disapprove, therefore, of liberalism in any shape or form.

## VII

## New York

PROGRESS of medical science in the metropolis, as revealed by a news item in all the great public gazettes:

That the theatre can be a valuable therapeutic agent, and that plays of the right sort may be curative of body and soul is the theory advanced by Channing Pollock, author of "The Fool," and accepted by the church through Edward Cosbey, pastor of St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie.

Mr. Cosbey has been conducting a soul and body clinic. Mr. Pollock wrote to him: "I agree with you that much of the sickness in a very sick world comes from overstress of the material. Our experience, manifested in thousands of letters, is that 'The Fool' has done for large numbers of people what you

are doing at St. Mark's. I should like to co-operate with you. Whenever a man comes to you for help in physical ills that you think might be set right by mental adjustment send him to us and we will ask him to be our guest at 'The Fool.'"

Mr. Cosbey replied saying he should be very much interested in trying and watching the experiment and would do so.

## VIII

## North Carolina

STATEMENT of the philosophical basis of Confederate evangelism, by the Rev. Dr. Cyclone Mack, preaching at Greensboro:

This country, from ocean to ocean and lake to gulf, needs to be mightily stirred to the eternal truth of God. The hour is come to believe in revivals. The devil is not in favor of revivals, neither are some of you; therefore, you are just like your old father. I am in favor of anything the devil is against and against anything the devil is for. Whenever you find the devil on one side of a question you will find me on the other side, individually, jointly and collectively. That is why I believe in revivals, because the devil doesn't. You say a revival is temporary; so is a bath, but a fellow needs one every spring.

## IX

## Iowa

EFFECTS of Prohibition, sex hygiene, the Y. M. C. A., Christian Endeavor and the war for democracy in Iowa, as reported by the *Iowa Legionaire*:

On July 1, 1917, there were 1,771 men, women, boys and girls in Iowa penal institutions. July 1, 1923, there were 2,376, a 38 per cent increase in six years.

On July 1, 1910, there were 550 young men and women prisoners at Anamosa. January 1, 1923, there were 934 youths and 79 women at Rockwell City, a total of 1,023, an increase of 69.8 per cent as compared with a 12.5 per cent population increase.





# Doing Right by Nell

*By Nunnally Johnson*

## I

I DID what I could for the O'Connells, neither more nor less than what I should expect Vincent or Nell to do for me were I in need of a friend. It chanced that, knowing them both quite intimately, I understood what lay at the bottom of their differences. And so, as I say, I served them only as a friend should always be willing to serve those he loves.

They had been married but a year, and it was an alliance particularly ideal in all respects so far as Vincent was concerned. Not only did it guarantee him a dependable address to which his rum-soaked remains might be delivered each night, but in addition it assured him a competent nurse and attendant to receive and resuscitate him before the next morning's hour for work. It also provided a cache for his over supply of liquor and someone always at hand to fetch a corkscrew. The whole arrangement of marriage, in fact, he found to be so felicitous that he was happy all the time, when he was sober as well as when he was not. And he appreciated it, too, perhaps as much as I, who, a bachelor of apparently permanent standing, frankly envied him his conveniences.

It may be, though, that I did appreciate the situation more than he; as well I should have, waking up in police stations, hospitals, gutters, miserable in mind and body, depressed, discouraged, sunk into the very depths, all because I did not have, as he had, the explanation to submit to a cop of a worried wife, an infant child or two (which, to be sure, he did not have) and miscel-

laneous other worries peculiar to married men.

It is one of the many curious aspects of the average policeman's mental character that an ore-eyed married man receives sounder advice and gentler treatment than a bachelor in the same condition; evidence, no doubt, of the average policeman's domestic unrightness.

But I was happy in Vincent's happiness, even as I envied him, for he was my friend. We had spent, and spent also after the first month or so of his marriage, many pleasant hours together, and I was glad that he had come to his reward.

At the same time I was sorry for Nell, often. Vincent was indeed a pig when drunk. I myself was no worse. As often as not he would roll in the gutter before going home, simply, I believe, to keep me company. It was also his habit, as the evening wore on and his hand became less and less steady, to spill a glass or two of gin over his shirt front, and I know of no worse aroma. Usually by the time he, or his body, reached home even a loving and understanding wife might be excused for objecting to him.

I saw quite plainly that the circumstances were entirely too propitious to last long. Vincent was, as he told me more than once, sitting pretty—too pretty, in my opinion. The gods, I recalled, do not approve of a man's having more than his measure of happiness before his appointed time comes. Every day, I realized, ends in darkness.

She had endured it, though, for a year, and often during that year, especially toward the end of it, I spoke to



him about his habits. I reminded him of Nell's cares and worries. She could not, I told him, stand the pace forever. Eventually there would be a breakdown, and then where would he be?

"You must control yourself," I said once. "Nell is not a peasant or a laborer. She is not very strong. You should conserve her, spare her strength, nurse her physical capacity along. This pace you are setting now will kill her, quickly, yes, too quickly for it to be worth while. My advice to you, as a friend, is to slack up, go easy, put as infrequent a strain on her as possible. You do that and she'll live a long time. But ignore my advice, and she is going to die on you."

The advice, as usually in such cases, was wasted.

"Nell's all right," he insisted. "She understands."

Granted, of course, but the fact remains that Nells were few and far between, and a man would be foolish to dispose of one without knowing whether there was going to be another.

## II

So I was not surprised, then, when one day shortly after the first anniversary of their marriage she sent for me.

"I understand what you are going to say, Nell," I said, taking her hand in mine, my heart truly wrenched by her haggard face and worn tired eyes. "I've been looking for this. Soon or late I knew it would come. Something must be done, at once."

"Anything, Cliff," she murmured, her voice as dispirited as her manner was exhausted. "Anything, so long as it is at once."

"I've tried to stop him, Nell. I've tried hard. I've faced him with the facts. I've begged, pleaded with him. And it has been of no use, no use whatever. He's not a bad fellow—you know that—but he's blind. Yes, blind to his own good fortune."

"Cliff," she said, lifting her sweet eyes to mine, "I don't know how much longer I am going to be able to stand it. Only a little, I'm sure. I'm a

wreck. My nerves are all shot to hell. I get no sleep, no rest—always up and watching for him to be brought home, gloriously boiled. I take him in, Cliff, and nurse him and see that he has everything that a husband ought to have."

"He's a fool," I declared, "but he's not a bad fellow, Nell."

"Yes, a fool, Cliff. He doesn't appreciate me. Few wives would do what I have done for Vincent. But he doesn't realize it. He takes it all very much for granted, and meanwhile, I'm being driven to an early grave."

"He doesn't mean exactly that, Nell; you are unfair to Vincent. He is, after all, a good fellow, but he's blind. He doesn't appear to be able to see where his own good lies."

Mentally I cursed the idiot. Nell was not so far gone as she claimed. It was simply her spirit that was broken. On a fair estimate she was good for another thirty years, provided she was not pressed too hard. Blind he was, and a fool too, for not seeing it.

"Blind perhaps," she replied, a hard edge to her voice, "but he'll have to see soon, or else I'm through."

I was genuinely broken up. There was no denying that the year had told hard on her. She was ten years older in looks than on the day she walked up the aisle to face Vincent in old St. Thomas's. She was downright dowdy, too, in her clothes—Nell, who once wore the most gorgeous of frocks in the jauntiest fashion! Truly Vincent was a fool.

"You're right, Nell," I agreed, "and something has got to be done—at once. Vincent can't be allowed to throw away an ideal home without an effort being made to save it."

"Cliff"—her two hands closed over mine—"I knew you'd see, I knew you'd understand. Frankly, my very good friend, this thing has gone deeper even than I've permitted myself to admit. There is no use dodging the fact that my love for Vincent is dying, is being killed. As strong as it was it could not remain whole and firm under such treatment. I've fought against it, Cliff,



but the fact remains, unless something is done—well, you can guess the end.”

I could—no husband for Nell and no place for Vincent to be delivered when he was in need of a place to be delivered.

“Nell,” I declare, “this must not happen.”

She was silent.

It is generally, I believe, just such circumstances as these that give birth to the greatest ideas. The emergency, the critical portents sharpen the wits and impel them to achievements beyond their natural capabilities. I can in no other way explain my own inspiration at this point.

I explained it to her. I went over the whole situation, as if we did not already know it, the better to impress her with its merits. Each of us had appealed to Vincent in what we regarded as the most likely way. Each of us had appealed to his better nature. We had failed. Nothing, it seemed, short of a tremendous shock promised relief.

“But, Cliff,” she whispered, “I can’t do that—it is against my whole nature, against every instinct I have.”

“You must, Nell. You must steel yourself. It is the only possible way. You, and you alone, can save him. Vincent, you must remember, has never seen a drunken person. We—he and I—have always sniffed ’em down so fast, tumbling one in right after the other, in many cases, in fact, forming a continuous cascade of liquor into the stomach, that he always and I often pass out of the picture earlier in the evening than anybody else in the city.

“Nell,” I said, “I can give you a hint as to the extent of the shock he would experience by seeing a thoroughly soured man or woman only by reminding you of the shock Dobbin received on seeing his first trolley car or automobile. If, furthermore, you should be the first Vincent ever saw, the shock would be all we need.

“Imagine, Nell, seeing you wallow in a gutter. Imagine his disgust, his nausea, his revulsion at seeing you babbling idiotically and slobbering! Imagine the

awakening, the sudden realization of what he himself must be like when drunk, the realization of what you have had to endure, the realization of what a dirty, filthy beast he has been! It is the one chance, little girl, the one chance to save the man you love, to save the little love nest you have made for him.”

“But, Cliff—” a tortured protest.

“To win much,” I countered, possibly a bit sententiously, “one must do much.”

“In point of fact,” I added, brightening, “it really isn’t such a difficult matter. Drinking, after all is said and done, is not really so distasteful.”

I pulled one of my flasks from a pocket.

“Take this,” I offered, pouring a nip in the metal top.

To give her full credit, she swigged it down like a little lady. A shudder ran through her whole body and she made a horrible face. Then she pulled herself together.

“What was that?” she asked.

“Scotch. Not so bad, eh?”

“Not so bad,” she confessed.

“Then,” I concluded, screwing the top on the flask, “You’ll go through with it.”

“I don’t know,” she replied, “but what I might.”

“Splendid,” I exclaimed, “We’ll win out yet! Vincent, remember, isn’t a bad fellow. But when he gets in that condition I don’t mind saying he is liable to give whiskey a pretty bad reputation.”

### III

WE lost no time. The next night, I believe it was, I hurriedly drove to the O’Connells, direct from my office, and, as luck would have it, caught Vincent still sober. He was in high spirits.

“She’s coming with us, Cliff,” he announced. “We are going to have a regular little party, respectable and decent. Just the three of us. Tip-top, isn’t it?”

I looked at Nell. She was in gala attire, her glistening red hair piled into a helter-skelter arrangement which added to the exciting brightness of her eyes.



And the apple-green silk she wore, draped tightly about her suddenly taut figure, reminded me, and Vincent too, of the Nell of other days. Her face was pale but her jaw was set and determined. The expression on her mouth forecast a heavy evening.

"One to start us," Vincent insisted, and while he was pouring the drinks I caught her hand and pressed it encouragingly.

She returned the pressure and smiled bravely at me. We accepted the drinks.

"To sin!" jauntily, and surprisingly, from Nell, who, I suddenly recalled, read the comic supplements.

Vincent was delighted with her spirit.

"A good old scout, Nell is," he announced to me. "She understands me. Have another, old kid."

In deference to her, she being a lady, we decided to enter no barrooms, choosing restaurants instead. We visited probably four, possibly five. It is not inconceivable that we visited six. The details, after all, are not essential.

We set out with our various roles well defined, I feeling somehow like a master mind. On my brain and executive ability depended everything. Nell I could rely on. Her part, as she understood, was to drink, fast and furiously, to accept everything offered her, and to get cock-eyed as quickly as possible. I, needing a clear head, felt that I should restrain myself, the more so as it was necessary for me to curb Vincent's lushing, that he might still be conscious when Nell flopped.

This at first did not appear difficult, but liquor, as many know, is an insinuating habit, rotting the lining of the stomach, weakening the kidneys, tearing down the will, and making mock of the best intentions, and presently Vincent was off, so fast, in fact, that I was worried. Urging temperance did no good. Reminding him of the respectability he promised for the party was even more futile. For a time I was panic stricken, and then a simple solution presented itself. I forthwith sped up Nell's drinks. I ordered them two at a time for her. I watched Vincent

anxiously and saw to it that Nell got twice or three times what he got. It vexed me, too, that she should exhibit such stubborn sobriety, but eventually my plan began to show results. With satisfied relief I noted the first signs of intoxication in her. I gave another order to the waiter. She kicked him in the pants as he walked away.

"Good girl," I murmured to myself.

And indeed she was behaving splendidly. She had fallen to with a courage that was above praise. It must have been medicine to her, for at first her body shook until I expected to hear her bones rattle, but she never faltered, she never hesitated. One after the other they came and passed down the red lane of her gullet with a rapidity that brought exclamations of delight from her husband. A woman, I thought, to be proud of, flesh and blood of the hearty old pioneer stock that braved all for their men folks! Erratic at first, she soon settled into a smooth, steady drinking, knocking off the highballs with machine-like precision. I saw success ahead.

At that, though, it was a close race. I made every effort to hold down Vincent, but almost without any results at all.

"Now, old man," I said, "you're swiping Nell's drink again. Where the hell are your manners?"

"She's my wife," he insisted. "Why the hell can't I take her drinks?"

"Who the hell's taking my drink?" asked Nell.

"I am," Vincent asserted, "Why the hell can't I?"

"Who the hell do you think you are?"

"Who the hell do you think *you* are?"

It went on a great deal like that. At length, though, under the persistent barrage of Scotch, a marvelous pacifier, Nell began to relax. Her rather strained manner disappeared, to be replaced, as she became more accustomed to the refreshments, by a charming gaiety. It took the usual form of affection and she caressed Vincent's face, rumbled his hair, squeezed his hands, and laughed lovingly into his mouth. In



turn he teased her, caught her into his arms and covered her gleaming eyes with kisses, oblivious of my presence, or the presence of the other diners.

I was forgotten. For the first time, at least, they lived in each other, laughing and chattering incoherently, childishly happy, bubbling over with love and pleasure. I watched them with satisfaction, their spirits soaring and the waiters rushing new rounds every few minutes.

I took advantage of an opportunity when Vincent was picking himself up after falling from his chair to whisper to her.

"Splendid, little girl," I said. "Two more and you'll be out."

She hammered the table with her fists.

"Who the hell do you think you are?" she demanded.

I calculated that an extra strong Martini, the strongest, in fact, that could be made, ought to turn the trick. I ordered it. Unless my view of the situation was in error Nell should drop within two minutes after drinking it. I decided to get them into the street, so no dishes would be broken. The check paid and our hats and sticks recovered from the check-room, I hurried them out the minute she had gulped it down. I led them to the corner, fortunately lighted well, and maneuvered them next to the gutter, figuring that an even stronger effect could be produced on Vincent by the sight of his wife in a gutter. I steadied them on the curb and waited for the *coup de grace*.

"How do you feel?" I asked Nell.

"Who the hell do you think you are?" she retorted.

I moved her a little nearer the corner, where there was a puddle. I decided to prop Vincent against the building.

"Stand here," I said, "and watch Nell. You're going to see something funny in a minute."

Nell was shouting at me.

"You ol' Erasmus, you, tha's what you are, you ol' 'Rasmus, you." She swayed and I held my breath. "Look, Vin, don't he look like ol' 'Rasmus?

That's him, too, ol' Rasmus! Go home, you ol' 'Rasmus you!"

The words stirred Vincent into action.

"Yes'r, you're right—ol' 'Rasmus. You *do* look like ol' 'Rasmus, you ol' 'Rasmus, you! Go way, ol' 'Rasmus, go way. Don't like ol' 'Rasmus, do we, pet?"

He shoved away from the building and came nearer to Nell. They fell into each other's arms, and Nell's rakish little turban slid off the back of her head. I caught it and clapped it on top. Vincent was making me angry.

"Go back, you idiot," I ordered, prying them apart. "Do you want to ruin everything?"

"Ol' 'Rasmus!"

They mumbled it several times together. I was exasperated. Then they went into an alley, too modest to take a drink from Vincent's flask in a public place. I waited without, furious with the way Vincent was acting. I heard the gurgle of the bottle, and occasionally, "Ol' 'Rasmus!" came from the dark, first in Nell's voice and then in Vincent's. Finally they emerged.

"Go home!" they commanded.

"You stand here," I replied curtly, catching her roughly by the arm and placing her in front of the puddle.

It was then that Vincent put the final touch to his evening of dumbness. He tried manfully to spring forward, evidently under the apprehension that I intended some wrong to Nell.

"Who the hell do you think you are?" he demanded.

It was a fatal move. He stumbled and shot headforemost toward me. I stepped nimbly aside, and he flopped in the puddle. I was disgusted. He rolled over so that his nose was above water and made it plain that he did not intend to get up.

"Fine!" I exclaimed. "A splendid finish!"

Nell rested her hand on my shoulder and surveyed his prostrate body, trying to understand what had happened.

"He fell," she remarked finally.

"Well," I said, trying to put some



optimism in my voice, "we'll have to try again. Better luck next time, maybe."

"He fell," she repeated.

"It was a noble dive."

I could not but admire her. She had taken at least twice as much to drink as Vincent, and yet here she was, still on her feet. Her eyes were bleary, to be sure, and her head rolled uncertainly, she was on the verge of collapse, but she was still standing, and Vincent was in the gutter. She regarded me for a while and then she studied Vincent's remains. A taxicab cut in toward the curb, spraying water on us and missing Vincent's hand by a hair. Nell gazed after it, unresentfully.

"Ol' 'Rasmus," she mumbled, evidently referring to the chauffeur.

"We might as well go home," I suggested. "I'll call a taxi."

She ruminated briefly and then, apparently having made up her mind, she released her hold on me. She stood alone, swaying dizzily, and then staggered toward the gutter. Slowly, deliberately, like a rheumatic old woman, she let herself down to her knees and crawled into the gutter.

"You're very foolish," I advised her.

But she did not heed me. She worked her way through the puddle to Vincent's body.

"Move over," she said, "I want to sleep next to the curb."

He stirred a little and she succeeded in getting her place at his side. Her arm fell across his chest. Her body relaxed. She did not move again.

I left them there, feeling at the time that it was a poor way of showing appreciation for what I had done.

#### IV

IN some respects, of course, the plan was not all it might have been, but as a whole it satisfied me. It is impossible to ask more of a plan than success. The O'Connells are very happy now. They seem to have found each other at last, after months of misunderstanding. I saw them last night again, in another gutter, a gutter in one of the best avenues in Flatbush. Nell appreciates what I did, perhaps to an exaggerated degree, for after all, as I told her, I did what a friend should be willing to do for those he loves. If they have found happiness, that is all the reward I ask.



**T**O be successful with women a man should learn to love differently, and indifferently.



**A** MAN may love many women in many ways, but it is always for the same reason.



**A** WOMAN can endure anything from a man but tenderness.





# A Lady of Leisure

By Jeannette Marks

## I

SHE laid the gold pencil down and looked out upon the sea. This was the fifth day out, and there remained only two days of the voyage. She had done her best. Indeed it might be said that every other resident in Back Bay, from Beacon Hill to Massachusetts Avenue, was an enduring monument to Aunt Sally's labors. There had been a general conviction that Aunt Sally, like all the worth-while things in Boston, would go on forever—perennial as the smile from the gold dome of the State House or spring budding in the Commons and the Public Gardens.

No one seemed to realize exactly what had happened, except Miss Sally herself. But she did, and she was free. When friends commented on the fact that she was starting abroad for "a little rest," Miss Sally would reply, "No, not a little rest but a great deal, I hope. You know I am beginning my new career of lady of leisure."

Forty years had she been preparing for this moment, and she seized the realization of it with the same vigor with which she had gripped every opportunity, every problem that had come to her. For the last time she had looked at the school-room desks in the beautiful old high-ceiled sunshiny rooms. For the last time she had shaken hands with them all, grown up men and women and boys and little tots who had come to say good-bye. She knew them well—three generations of them—but for all that she was glad she had come

to the end of this career and could begin one of leisure.

The week following, with the throb of the machinery vibrating through the ship, Miss Sally had paced the deck. To her ears the machinery beat out one word: "Free! Free!" But when the ship lurched dolphin-like over an Atlantic wave, dipping into a trough and coming up, up and down bobbed the words "Lady of Leisure! Lady of Leisure!" It occurred to her that this was an excellent opportunity to make full notes on what it meant to be leisurely. So she took up again the gold pencil and a red morocco notebook given her by the grandchild of her oldest pupil, and began to write: "Leisure is that condition of mind and body in which all faculties and sensations are in a state of harmony and equilibrium. But what, in the last analysis, is a lady of leisure?"

So far Miss Sally had filled every hour with carefully planned deck-pacing—this she called idleness; with even more carefully planned reading—surely one of the attributes of a lady of leisure; with immense arrears of social correspondence—to keep up and increase her social contacts had now become more important than ever; and with the making out of encyclopædic lists of what she was to do and to see in London. To date this had been her *en voyage* routine. But where had been the leisure? Where the sense of much vacant time and of no occupation?

Now, which of the many features of a lady of leisure's life should she add to her program immediately? It



must be something that would suggest idleness; the right to do as she pleased, freedom from demand. All her life long Miss Sally had pinned herself down to hard facts and to clear thinking. Otherwise it is possible that the profits of Boston's most successful private school might not have accumulated so steadily into upward of several hundreds of thousands. Certainly, she decided, freedom from demand was the essence of this new career.

A steward came out of a passageway and blew his bugle call for dinner.

"There, of course," exclaimed Miss Sally, "I will take my breakfast in bed after this!"

The last thing that night she summoned the stewardess to her and announced her intention of breakfasting in bed.

"I thought you was a grand sailor, mum," said Mrs. Morey. "Aren't you well?"

"Yes," said Miss Sally, with whom a carefully considered honesty had been an invariable policy, "yes, I am entirely well. But I, Mrs. Morey, I—"

A flush mounted Miss Sally's temples to the edges of her stiff iron gray hair, and a wave of self-consciousness swept her whole being like a wave of seasickness.

"I see, mum," replied the stewardess, rolling two suspicious eyes at Miss Sally, "you've no need to apologize for bein' accustomed to 'avin' breakfast in bed."

Miss Sally allowed silence to hang between Mrs. Morey and herself, and hid behind it as behind a curtain. She had never had breakfast in bed in her life. She had never been ill, and she had hoarded up every concession to love of ease, miser-like, for this day which had now come. At the moment, all sense of ease was gone and she felt vulgar, weak, an impostor.

"What time will you 'ave it, mum?" asked Mrs. Morey. "And, of course, you'll 'ave your tea—"

At that instant there was a cry for the stewardess, frantic ringing of a bell and a groan which suggested that the author of it considered she had reached the end.

"Hit's that lady in 35—dreadful sick she is, mum. She was makin' her will last night. But she won't get out of it as easy as all that! What for breakfast, mum?"

Miss Sally replied that seven o'clock was her usual hour; she heard the stewardess's exclamation of surprise interrupted by an explosion of groans from "35." She saw Mrs. Morey open the door quickly, and heard her call back something which sounded like, "You mean hate, mum?"

Too late did Miss Sally realize that seven o'clock had been a *faux pas* in breakfast hours for ladies of leisure. And it was in vain she tried to reassure herself by recalling several paragraphs she had written down in the red morocco notebook on leisure's ability to do as it pleased.

## II

HER self-respect was agreeably reinforced when promptly at seven o'clock—not eight after all—Mrs. Morey entered fresh and starched, and bearing a tray with tea and rolls upon it.

"With 35 groanin' so, mum, I couldn't stop to ask anythin'. But I suppose you meant your tea at seven, mum."

Miss Sally did not quite understand, but it did not matter, and here was her breakfast at just the hour she wanted it. Tea and rolls did not seem much of a breakfast. She took her notebook from underneath her pillow and made this note: "Lady of Leisure breakfast, tea and rolls." Then she ate all before her even to the last crumb.

She looked wistfully at the door through which this sparrow's ration had come. She arose, bolted the door, and began to dress. She knew that she must get a maid in London



and there was to be a villa beside the Mediterranean. She must prepare herself for both. She went through a pantomimic submission to being maided, thrusting out one foot, then the other, nodding imaginary assents or negatives to questions about costume as she slipped her skirt over her head, and feeling every moment more undignified than she had ever felt in her life.

She was just in the act of seating herself for pantomimic brushing of her hair, when there came the sound of heavy rattling dishes, a knock at the door, and Mrs. Morey's voice unmistakably calling, "Your breakfast, mum!"

Miss Sally's mind shot out tentacles and caught hold of Mrs. Morey's "Hate, mum." This then was breakfast. She took no time to consider what was the frugal nothing she had eaten at seven o'clock. She called out for Mrs. Morey to wait till she could unlock her door, she grabbed her nightgown and put it on over everything she had on, she shot back the bolt of her door, and with a spring reminiscent of eighteen rather than sixty-five, she bounded into bed calling "Come in!"

Under an immense weight of toast, coffee, fruit, eggs, bacon, rolls and marmalade, in staggered Mrs. Morey.

The stewardess set the tray down on the table beside the bed and said, "You're lookin' better, mum. Are you feelin' better?"

"Yes," came faintly from Miss Sally.

"'Tis a mistake for ladies to change their 'abits. If they're accustomed to lyin' in bed, they should lie and not go traipsin' the decks in the early mornin' gettin' themselves all damp and salted. Don't you think so, mum?"

"Yes, yes, surely," answered Miss Sally, wondering how she could induce her boots to seem less "booty" under the covers. They did stand up horribly. Mrs. Morey's eyes made her think of a lobster, they stuck out

so, and she was sure they would see everything.

"I like maidin' my ladies, mum, so I'll just take your suit out and brush it haff." She picked up the coat and turned it carefully in her hands. It met with her approval even if not of English make. But there was a spark of malice in the protruding eyes as she revolved them about the cabin. "Where's the skirt, mum?"

The bed clothes quivered. There was not a quaver, however, in Miss Sally's voice as she replied, "It must be somewhere."

Miss Sally had always felt that imitating the Father of her Country could be overdone. She could honestly say that she had never told a lie. On the other hand, there had been many occasions on which she had felt that it would be discreet to be accurate as far as she went but to stop short of an exposure of all the facts. This she called being a good executive.

Mrs. Morey's eyes had missed various other articles of clothing which should have been over the backs of chairs or laid out on the sofa. Miss Sally's hair, too, was fully dressed.

"I fetched you a 'uge breakfast," said Mrs. Morey, still pretending to search and working her way nearer and nearer the bed.

"Yes, thank you," answered Miss Sally, "delicious," seemingly absorbed in coffee, and toast and bacon, but watching the approach of the stewardess.

"Ladies of leisure," continued Mrs. Morey, "eats more than those that works."

Either the ship did give a lurch or Miss Sally was hypnotized by Mrs. Morey's discovery of her new rôle.

Anyhow the stewardess, now close to the bed, caught hold of Miss Sally's protruding booted foot and cried out, "Oh, beg pardon, mum! 'Ow this ship rolls!"

Miss Sally's coffee cup swayed away from her lips but she made no reply. Each knew that the other



knew. But Miss Sally did not hear Mrs. Morey later in the day at the stewards' dinner table saying to an interested group,

"So I caught 'old and it didn't feel like any 'uman foot I ever felt. She 'ad her boots on underneath those covers. Either she's hout of 'er mind—maybe there's some man in this, it attacks 'em awful at her age—~~or~~ this is some new kind of sea-sickness I don't understand! They do get notions in their 'eads if they're sick enough!"

Miss Sally spent the rest of the day in acknowledging to herself an error of judgment in attempting breakfast under the crustacean eyes of Mrs. Morey. The more quickly she could cut all associations with a workaday life and all suspicions that she had ever lived one, the more quickly could she learn the parts of her new rôle as lady of leisure. And without one pang of regret did she leave Mrs. Morey and that ship.

### III

ON the first morning of her club life in London, with a sense of security was breakfast in bed undertaken. She had learned that art as far as disaster and self-control could teach it to her. She felt grateful even to Mrs. Morey on this morning on Piccadilly while the summer was still young and some love affairs among the birds in Hyde Park were by no means old. On such a morning in such a mood with such a breakfast tray before her, to be a lady of leisure was a noble vocation. There was something about these big unhurried spaces of time which heightened in some indescribable way spiritual values. Miss Sally set aside the most perfect combination in the way of rolls and butter she had ever eaten, took out her red morocco notebook and jotted down this thought. She considered it a good one.

It was in this mood that Miss Sally went forth from her Club at ten

o'clock. London was after her own heart, for it was spacious and quiet like her beloved Back Bay. On her previous trips abroad she had been accompanied by one of her assistant teachers. Together they had looted for particular school courses all the galleries in England and Europe, all the monuments, all the antiquities. These had been long businesslike mornings and afternoons in which a sense of achievement was usually yoked with a tired neck. But the sense of freedom Miss Sally had this morning was something different, was something altogether superior.

Nevertheless things flattened out strangely during the week that followed. Was she making a mistake in trying the old and the familiar under new conditions? Was it not her duty in her new rôle to try the unfamiliar? A mind stored with directions and notes for this career, she took constitutionals—she no longer called them walks—in Hyde Park, rearranging and selecting her plans with all the fire and fury with which annually she had shaken the tangles out of her school schedule. Hyde Park was in marvelous bloom. Ladies of leisure always had beautiful flowers near or on themselves. She would get some at once. She had never before bought a flower for herself. That would be something new and unfamiliar.

She made her way over to a shop in Piccadilly where the windows were filled with orchids. The elegant young man who looked down on Miss Sally's stiff iron gray hair and rosy, plain face told her haughtily that the orchids were a guinea apiece, Madam. For an instant Miss Sally felt as if her circulation had been injured, for economy had seemed to her, if used for good and serviceable ends, a beautiful law in the difficult art of living. Here was something in the new rôle of lady of leisure she must work out and try to understand even if she was sure she did not understand orchids and never



would. From the elegant young man she bought a dozen as if, in her eyes at least, they were no more to be valued than common daisies. With the order given, the clerk's manner changed. He took her address with deference, he led her with a flourish of black frock coat to the door and bowed her out profoundly.

Certainly, thought Miss Sally, she had carried that out successfully. Yet, somehow, despite success, Hyde Park and the birds, it was not a happy morning. She felt like a gambler and a cheat—in short, like an unselfrespecting spendthrift old woman who, after a lifetime of useful and frugal living, had "blown in" twelve guineas just for the purpose of impressing a vulgar young cockney and re-enforcing her rôle as lady of leisure. Nevertheless, with all its problems she was committed to this new career. And Miss Sally had never committed herself to anything in her life but that she had pursued it to a conclusion.

She had determined on the purchase of a lorgnette. The possession of a lorgnette among the ladies of leisure of her acquaintance had been invariable. By inquiry she had discovered where at a certain vendor of luxuries she could get the best. After she had bought it, she would carry it in triumph to her dressing table, and there and then practice with it before her mirror, the orchids on either side of her, the orchids—no, the lorgnette—raised in this fashion! Miss Sally sighed. There were certain heads of New York schools—distinguished members of the Head-mistresses' Association—who knew how to use a lorgnette to perfection. Miss Sally knew that she was plain—there had never been any doubt in her mind about that—and maybe even a lorgnette above the short aquiline nose could not produce in her case anything like that New York atmosphere which had dazzled her all too often, even making her forget that the profits of her school

had been far in excess of most New York schools. . . . Well, she would buy the lorgnette on the day following. That would be the true spirit of leisure,—no haste, no demands.

She went to bed that night thoroughly tired out with being idle. Undoubtedly the day had been too much for her. The light from the street seemed to spread itself in a strange way over the orchids on her dressing table. Did the things move or did they merely seem to move? She knew they were spotted but what made that curious mottled motion. There was something reptilian about them. The whole room was filled with their sinuous curves and twistings. Ugh, they were swarming out of the two vases and crawling all over the floor.

Miss Sally woke up with cries for help. She rubbed her eyes: the orchids were there, they were in the vases and the light from Piccadilly was still flickering on them. She sat up in bed, put on her slippers and advanced cautiously upon the orchids. She reached the dressing table and looked out of the windows and down upon the pavement. It was three in the morning and the street was empty. She seized the orchids and tossed them out of the window. She went back to bed and slept soundly.

Miss Sally lost no time in getting to her dressing table the next morning, quite in the mood to throw a fifty-pound note into the air in exchange for a gold-mounted lorgnette. Anything but those orchids! There would be "value" in the lorgnette; she felt that it would somehow be an actual assistance to her. She would practice using it on the London *Times* when the maid had brought the newspaper in with the breakfast. . . . She would go at once down to Regent Street to take this forward step in her new career.

Before leaving the Club, as she was putting on her eyeglasses, she made the high resolution to use the



lorgnette immediately. She would lift it to her nose at once. She would use it for the first time for the inspection of what there was in the shop. She might even look at the clerk. No one should know that she was unaccustomed to a lorgnette.

All the way from the Club to the shop she was alternately lifting and lowering an imaginary lorgnette. Ugh, the things were like the antennæ of some creature! Now, now, thought Miss Sally, as she stepped into the shop, a mood like this even before she had bought the thing would never do. Though her hand, steady through a lifetime of hard work, had begun to tremble, her will power carried her unflinchingly on. She inspected lorgnettes and chose the most elegant of gold-mounted affairs. She grasped the stick and brought the glass with a quick upward swing, as she had seen it done, to her nose. But she had forgotten that her eyeglasses were still on. As the lorgnette struck the glasses, her lenses were shattered and fell in pieces to the floor.

She caught her breath; she held her ground one second, she laid the lorgnette on the counter, and then for the first time in her life she fled. She looked neither to one side nor behind her. She could hear the clerk calling, "Madam, here is the nose piece of your pince nez,—Madam—." She was gone. On and on she hurried, finding her way without knowing where she was going, to the Serpentine. She was a fool, an old fool, she kept telling herself,—a silly, vain, superficial old fool at sixty-five who had spent forty years dreaming about a career which was not worth one month of the hard-working, honest life she had really lived. She was absurd, despicable, cheap. And oh, she was lonely!

#### IV

HER eyes smarting and her vision a little blurred by the loss of her

glasses, she sat down on a park bench by the Serpentine. Children were sailing their boats. She looked at their brown bare legs and rosy faces as a hungry woman stares at a loaf of bread. Beyond the Serpentine floated a mirage: the vision of a sun-flooded street in Back Bay, before it the Gardens and over all the gleaming dome of the State House. She had given up all that sunshine and the children for what? For a worthless masquerade!

"To be an old fool at sixty-five!" she summed it up aloud to herself.

"What did you say, mum?" inquired a familiar voice.

Miss Sally looked up. "Oh, Mrs. Morey," she groaned, "to be an old fool at sixty-five!"

Mrs. Morey glanced at her sharply.

"You don't look it, mum!" she said.

But she scented the approach of the dénouement. At the Stewards' table she would have called it "mystery."

"Do sit down beside me, Mrs. Morey," gasped Miss Sally. "I—I was looking at the children, wishing—"

Then she gulped, gulped in vain and burst into sobs then and there by the bank of the Serpentine. Mrs. Morey put her arm out and drew Miss Sally to her shoulder,—a place often used for trans-Atlantic comfort. Miss Sally wept. They often cried.

"There, there, mum," soothed Mrs. Morey, "sure you haven't got over it yet. Indeed, mum, the after effects sometimes last as long as a week."

"I—I don't know what you are talking about," sniffed Miss Sally, drying her eyes. "It's the children."

"Oh," said Mrs. Morey, a little stunned and thinking that there was a man in it after all. But aloud she continued, "Don't you worry yourself about those children, mum. Maybe their legs is bare and their clothes poor, but the most of them has proper homes."

"No, no, no," objected Miss Sally,



"it is not that; it is that I want my own."

"So that's it," said Mrs. Morey, and was still an instant. "Well, mum, it must have been some time ago 'e went away and left you."

"He—what?" gasped Miss Sally.

"Went away and left you, mum. I know they will do it. Did 'e take all the children with 'im?"

"Oh," objected Miss Sally, dry-eyed enough now, "it isn't that. I never married but I've had children enough for all that!"

"God bless me, mum!" exclaimed Mrs. Morey, thoroughly shocked by the coolness of this exposure. "They do do it, and I knowed there was a mystery somewhere. A neat and respectable-lookin' lady like you don't act the way you did for nothing. But you don't look it, mum."

"I don't understand," said Miss Sally. "I had a school in Back Bay, Boston."

"Oh," gasped Mrs. Morey, "I was afeared it might be somethin' much worse."

"Worse? It could not be worse than it is," asserted Miss Sally.

"Dear me, mum, then don't tell me!" cried out Mrs. Morey, utterly confused. Twenty-four hours of Mr. Morey had convinced her she knew the worst life had to tell a woman. The twenty-fifth hour she had left

Mr. Morey for the vocation of stewardess. And she thanked God nightly that she had not seen Mr. Morey since. But what could this be? She did not feel equal to it.

The confession went on, "I worked forty years getting ready to be a lady of leisure and now—"

"And you don't know 'ow?"

"Yes, I know *how*, but, oh! Mrs. Morey, I hate it."

"I don't blime you, my dear," said Mrs. Morey. "The only thin' has ever reconciled me to twenty-four hours of Mr. Morey has been twenty-five years of hard work carryin' trays and 'oldin' their heads and tellin' them they wouldn't die when I wished they would! And with the life you must have lived, it would take more'n being a stewardess to give you somethin' to live for!"

"And I'm so homesick, Mrs. Morey."

"W'y don't you just go 'ome, mum, and begin hover again?"

"Begin over again?" repeated Miss Sally.

"We're makin' the trip back to-morrow, and this time of year goin' that way means an empty ship. I'll venture you could 'ave the same cabin and me, mum, maidin' you the best way I can."

"Yes, Mrs. Morey," said Miss Sally, "but not breakfast in bed!"



## Mythology

By Roda Roda

"YOU remember, dear sir," said Menelaos Patsikakis, wholesale dealer in raisins, "that the sorceress Circe changed the Greeks into swine and then back again into men."

"Yes, yes," smiled Ferhad-Bey, "but of those old legends one never can believe more than half."





# Franzl

*By Alfons Petzold*

THE evening is damp and cold.  
Like queer fish pedestrians flounder  
in the lake of the square.

Brilliantly lit up, the trolleys pass  
through the gray drizzle, spangling the  
pavement with glittering reflections.

Inside, the passengers' coats rub  
against each other. The place is over-  
crowded, packed.

By the aid of my elbows I succeed  
in getting a seat.

Strange people are all around me . . .

People with red eyes and tired,  
greenish-yellow foreheads coated with  
soot—workmen.

People with predatory noses, icy  
lips, and eyes that glare like the glass  
beads of a computing machine—shop-  
keepers.

People whose faces have grown flat  
with indifference of life, mummies thou-  
sands of years old, among the dead of  
yesterday and today—clerks and small  
officials.

I long for a face in which glows the  
bright flame of life, a face with eyes

that speak of love or hatred, high joy  
or deep sorrow!

And what do I find.

Masks of unspeakable weariness . . .

At last—my roving eyes settle upon  
a vision.

It is a girl in her teens, her cheeks  
are pale, but her eyes alive with joy.  
Her dress is poor, but the touch of  
coquetry is there.

Against the background of the  
opaque, dustcoated, grayish window-  
pane her face shines, glad, smiling,  
singing with happiness!

Now she turns toward the window.

I see her pretty profile.

She lifts a hand, and I watch her  
trace something upon the pane.

I read.

It is a name.

"Franzl!"

And now I know why the poor little  
thing is so radiant.

I look at her with tender under-  
standing. . . .

She is the sun above this morass.



IN order to attract a woman a man need only remember to do two things:  
overestimate her charms, and underestimate her age.



A MAN wants his wife to be one of two things: a picture puzzle or a carbon  
copy.





# She Tells Her Daughter

By Djuna Barnes

[A One-Act Play]

*(The interior of a handsomely decorated drawing-room. It is paneled in brocaded heron-blue satin. Twisted glass and candlesticks throw a shower of sparks into the cool surfaces of many mirrors.)*

*The studied odor of tiger lilies pervades the air, mixed with the sweet, faint perfume of a single flower used in the talcum affected by Ellen Louise Theresa Deerfont, and through them both, like a sharp and pointed arrow, the piercing arrangement of some oriental bouquet exhaled from the every movement of Madame Deerfont.*

*Madame Deerfont stands by a slender Italian chair. She is pretending to read the pages of a smart French journal.*

*Ellen Louise Theresa is perusing, with a nefariously Greek nose, the pages of "The Book of Beautiful Women," shaking, from time to time, a globular curl over thin, languid shoulders. She is obviously sixteen.)*

MADAME DEERFONT

My dear, you have reached maturity. It is time that I should talk to you seriously.

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

But I know all about it, mother.

MADAME DEERFONT

I don't know what you mean when you say you know all about it, but what I am going to tell you, you can't possibly know; the true story of my life.

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

*(Settling herself comfortably.)* Oh, I know all that. You were born in England, you fell in love with a fellow named Percy, you went to school, you met papa—

MADAME DEERFONT

*(Nervously fingering the stopper of the pot-pourri.)* No, that is not it. There must be a bond of fundamentals

between us from now on. I want you know me, not as I appear to the audience or those who accept the hospitality of my home, but as I am, dark, obscure, terrible—

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

Mother, do behave! What is so dreadful in the fact that you are an actress and smoke cigarettes?

MADAME DEERFONT

*(Crumbling leaves between her jewelled fingers.)* What a child you are, so young, so inexperienced—

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

I'm not. I just don't see any reason for taking all this so tragically.

MADAME DEERFONT

That is the very attitude of youth, Ellen Louise Theresa. Let us begin at the beginning. I was the daughter of a chemist.



ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

(*Startled.*) Why, I thought—

MADAME DEERFONT

Exactly, you thought I was the daughter of an M.P. Well this is the first blow, but the truth is the truth.

I was born in Brooklyn; I never saw England. I was improperly educated. I was waspish. I used to torment animals—

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

(*Excited.*) O-Oh, did you kill cats?

MADAME DEERFONT

(*Visibly agitated.*) I am not going into details. Then when I was fourteen I met Ramey in a cigarette shop—

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

Why, mother, did you smoke at that age?

MADAME DEERFONT

(*Evasively.*) They were for your grandfather. Well, anyway I met Ramey. He was consumptive. He had nervous ways with his hands. I was very sorry for him, and excited because I thought he was dying . . . slowly—

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

Why, mother—

MADAME DEERFONT

He was very grateful to me. I took him up into the garret and we read "Hamlet" together, and he recited bits of the "Lily Maid," and he looked so pitiful, and yet so touching that . . . (*Aside*) I can't go into that; she would never understand. (*Aloud*)—then he went away—

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

Didn't you ever kiss him?

MADAME DEERFONT

(*Vaguely.*) I don't remember.

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

(*Now thoroughly interested.*) Go on!

MADAME DEERFONT

I was morose for a time, until I was about eighteen, then a thing happened—(*She breaks off; a shower of leaves falls back into the jar.*) I have always been thoughtful by temperament; I had been left too much alone. Perhaps my mother was to blame. She was always crying and making my father nervous and drawing our heads down onto her bosom saying, "I shall never recover," and of course no one ever recovers from the mortal blow of life, and eventually she died. She could not let up even then. Dying, she said to my father, rising up on her elbow, her lace falling away in a wild and disordered cascade, "You see, I told you so." Then I was alone a year with my father, thinking about it all the time. One day a man came into the shop, asking for some medicine. He was thin and not particularly good looking, but there was something passionate in that look—terrible and excessive. I watched him from the crack of the door. I remember what I thought. I said to myself: "He has believed something I do not know or understand." He went away presently. I came out and talked to my father. He let me paste labels on bottles. I wanted to put on only those marked Poison, but he said that was ridiculous, and he would not let me—finally he came back one day, while I was singing—

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

Who?

MADAME DEERFONT

The same young man.

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

What were you singing?

MADAME DEERFONT

I don't remember. I think it was "In



My Lady's Chamber." Well, he stepped right into the room and took my hands off the keys and he said in a peculiarly quiet voice: "Now, that's enough of that."

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

How funny!

MADAME DEERFONT

(*Hysterically, putting her black lace handkerchief to her mouth.*) Yes, wasn't it. So we got to be very good friends—only—

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

Only what?

MADAME DEERFONT

My father forbade me to see him, because of the way he walked directly into the room, taking my hands off the keys. Father saw that and was angry—but we met—often—mostly at night.

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

Were the nights awfully dark?

MADAME DEERFONT

Yes, quite dark. I used to get out of bed, put my slippers and dressing gown on, and tip-toe down the stairs—my room was at the head of the back stairs—and my heart beat so—

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

(*Excited.*) So what?

MADAME DEERFONT

The locket on my neck trembled. We would hide in the corner of the garden, or go to his place. His father kept a livery stable. We would crawl into the hay and laugh and were frightened—

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

(*With conviction.*) My, you were a bad girl!

MADAME DEERFONT

(*Quickly.*) We could smell the varnishes on the different carriages. "That

is red," I would say, and he would answer, "No, that's a black varnish smell." Sometimes, if we did not know what to say, he would show me the harnesses, places where they had been mended with round copper nails; the saddles, the combs and brushes. I liked tasting the lump salt where the tongues of the horses had worn it smooth and shiny, and I felt eager and amazed.

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

Why?

MADAME DEERFONT

(*Becoming more and more agitated.*) Then one night he told me he loved me, and after that—everything seemed nearer to me. I could not bear the summer nights because they were so all about me, and the stars in the sky seemed to be so terribly far away, but yet they seemed to be at a distance from me—but you can't understand all that. After several months he went away.

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

Don't skip parts like that.

MADAME DEERFONT

I did not look at the sky. Sometimes I went to the barn and lay in the hay, thinking—

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

What about? Didn't you like him any more?

MADAME DEERFONT

I thought about danger and—death. (*Aside.*) It's no use—

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

Why don't you go on, now you've got to the most exciting part?

MADAME DEERFONT

One night while I was lying in the hay, he came in. I could hear him breathing among the horses. I remember his breathing because it was so hurried among that big, slow breathing all about, and I sat up holding the knife so hard that the handle cut into my flesh—



ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

Knife! What knife?

MADAME DEERFONT

Oh, a knife I found lying in the hay, his, an English blade that set into the handle when not in use, but when it was, it would not bend, or shut, or be safe. When he got near I— *(She is so agitated that she cannot continue.)*

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

*(Childishly, clapping her hands.)*

It's so exciting! Then what did you do?

MADAME DEERFONT

*(Aside.)* I can't tell her. *(Aloud.)* Then? Why nothing. I went away, quietly—home—

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

Didn't you ever see him again?

MADAME DEERFONT

No, I never saw him again, but lots of people went to the funeral—

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

Funeral! What funeral? Did he die?

MADAME DEERFONT

*(Laughing, high-pitched.)* How silly of me to forget the point of the story! Of course he died. He killed himself.

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

*(Wide-eyed.)* Oh! How?

MADAME DEERFONT

Why with that knife, right in his shirt, over the heart, he must have died instantly—without a regret, as they say— *(The stopper of the jar snaps in her fingers.)*

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

And is that all?

MADAME DEERFONT

That's all. Your father married me then, he was always good, you must remember that. He said he would help me out of my trouble, and he did.

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

What trouble?

MADAME DEERFONT

Why my father, he had made things very uncomfortable for me. He had married again, a great lazy brute of a creature called Daisy, I could not bear it. I wanted a home of my own.

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

Then you came here?

MADAME DEERFONT

Heavens no! We had a little apartment for a while overlooking the bay. Then shortly you were born. You must always love and respect your father.

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

Why, of course—

MADAME DEERFONT

*(Aside.)* It's the best I could do, she would not have understood. *(Aloud.)* Then after that, perhaps three or so more years, we came here, and here we have lived, happily ever after.

ELLEN LOUISE THERESA

*(Disentangling herself from the chair, in a blasé voice.)* Well you see, I did know all about it, all but a few details; Brooklyn, and all that sort of thing.

MADAME DEERFONT

*(Lighting a cigarette.)* Yes, of course, all but a few details. . . .

Curtain.





# American Institutions

## IV

### A BACHELOR APARTMENT

*By Charles G. Shaw*

IT consists of a living-room with an alcove, a bedroom and a bath, and is located on the second floor. The Victrola is playing "Selections from the Scandals of 1923," which record it has ground out seven consecutive times. In the corner of the alcove, rigged out as a kitchenette-pantry-bar, the owner of the establishment is engaged in shaking cocktails; they are pink and potent cocktails. Up and down goes the shaker; clink-clink goes the ice; then the cap is removed, and the libation is poured into a thin-stemmed goblet which is raised to the fellow's lips for two seconds and lowered empty. A "dividend," quite as huge as the original, is "squeezed" from the shaker, which is replaced upon a diminutive oak sideboard, the distinguished adornment of which is a silver-plated tantalus. In addition, there are several glasses of odd sizes, two bottle-openers, a corkscrew, one gold-mounted cigarette case containing three cigarettes, two boxes of matches, a container of cracked ice, one punch-bowl, four lemons, one sugar receptacle, and six empty White Rock bottles. Within the sideboard are five quarts of gin, three pints of Scotch whisky, one-half a quart of Italian vermouth and a bottle of domestic champagne. There are also two glass-topped tabourets and the aforementioned phonograph in the alcove: that is all.

The owner engulfs half his second cocktail, turns off the machine, and moves into the bedroom, where he studies himself in an ebony-framed pier-glass. Near the window, the curtains

of which are drawn, is a three-quarters mahogany bed, and next to it a dresser on which are two military hair brushes, one shoe horn, three nail files and a hand mirror. In its drawers, in a polyglot mass, are collars, socks, handkerchiefs, ties, gloves, mufflers, and underwear.

The walls of the room are embellished with photographs of certain comely maidens, all of whom suggest the grave section of a motion-picture magazine; the most striking of the lot is set in an oval silver frame and stands on a table by the bed. Opposite, are two clothes closets that harbor four gray cheviot suits, two blue serges, one dinner-jacket, one tail-coat, two pairs of dress trousers, one flannel checkered waistcoat (which is worn only upon occasions of leaving town or of extreme hangover), one morning coat (which is practically never worn), two golfing suits and several overcoats. They are cared for by a visiting valet who registers an attendance for an hour each day. On the closet floor is an assembly of patent-leather pumps, boots, sporting shoes, and soiled linen. A stringless tennis racquet and odd pictures of college and fraternity groups occupy an upper shelf.

After a close scrutiny of his exterior, the bachelor adjusts his tie, forces a recalcitrant lock of hair into place, and downs the remainder of his drink. He gazes at himself again in the looking-glass, and smiles contentedly. Then he produces a cigarette from a brown leather case, lights it, and stalks into



the living-room via the bathroom. The latter is scrupulously spotless and thoroughly equipped with talcum powder, toilet water, bicarbonate of soda, shaving cream, peroxide, adhesive tape, Bromo Seltzer, court-plaster, styptic pencils, Lysol, rubber sponges, orange sticks, throat sprays, nail-brushes, Lavis and hair restorer, and is tiled with tiny blocks of porcelain. On the back of the door hangs a pair of blue and white pajamas and a green dressing-gown.

Gray and maroon is the underlying color scheme of the living-room, though an occasional application of yellow occurs here and there. On the walls are prints of cock fights and photographs of dogs, motor boats, polo ponies—and of the owner himself. The main piece of furniture is the couch, which is heavily upholstered in a figured cretonne. It is low and deep, and is so located as to derive a peculiarly seductive effect from a nearby Turkish lamp, when the main lights are switched off and the window curtains drawn. Four silk-covered cushions decorate the couch and, on the left of it, is a small stand supporting a silver-garnished humidor (devoid of anything to smoke) and an empty box of matches. Then, there are certain objects that he prizes very highly and exhibits with the hugest pride: a gold cigar-cutter that doesn't work, several briar pipes that are so encrusted with caked tobacco that each holds, approximately, a thimbleful, a patent cigar-lighter that emits the feeblest of sparks, and a silver loving-cup (the second prize of the Staplehurst golf tournament).

In addition to several chairs of divers sizes and a baize-covered card-table (folded in the corner), there are two bookcases and a writing desk. The

bookcases possess glass doors and the following volumes, among others: O'Brien's "Shadows of the South Seas," "The Thousand and One Nights" (unexpurgated edition), "Wild Game Hunting in New Zealand," Balzac's "Contes Drolatiques," "Football and How to Watch It," by Percy Haughton; The Waverly Novels, Boccaccio's "Decameron," "The Art of Lawn Tennis," by William T. Tilden, 2nd; "The Bartender's Guide," "The Mysterious Affair at Styles," "The Care of the Horse," and the Rubaiyat of Omar. On the lower shelves are stacks of ancient issues of *La Sourire* and *The Tattler*, and, surmounting the cases, pewter mugs, tobacco jars, the model of a square-rigged schooner and an enameled clock.

He of the household meditates for a moment, scratches his chin, and turns to the writing-desk, the contents of which consist of three theatre door-checks, seven letters (two unopened), five musical comedy programs, nineteen unpaid bills, four two-cent stamps, a paper cigarette holder, a stub-pen and an inkwell, one-seventh full. Fumbling for several moments among the many pigeonholes, he at length produces a small notebook, a careful examination of which brings forth an expression of relish. He raises the telephone from the top of the desk and calls a number.

"Is Gladys in?" he inquires. "Oh, is that you, Gladys? Yes, this is Harry. Of course. Oh, I've been away. Ah—er—abroad. Why, yes, I've thought of you a lot. No, not a thing. Well, why don't you put on your hat and—"

But the rest is lost in the shrill shriek of an exhaust whistle from a passing delivery truck.





# The White Pig Comes to Ribas

By Leonard Lanson Cline

## I

AND there—said Tano—where you see some charred logs, is where Rafael used to live. A wood-cutter he was, but he found a baby in the woods one day, Jesus, and took it home with him. It was the devil himself that Rafael took home with him, and from that day the curse on his house, till the fire came at last and burned it up.

You may think this is a lie I'm telling you, but if I am a liar then so was my mother, that has been in the grave these seventeen years. There's nobody in the *comarca* laughs at the story unless it is Don Pedro, but what of him? for he's crazy as old Sabel, she that talks every night with the ghost of Bishop Frankila, and that was his mistress a thousand years ago, and is doomed to live on this earth forever suffering for him the punishment of his sin, to the end that heaven be not deprived of one of its saints.

Keep your ears open and a Hail Mary in your mouth, and I'll tell you the truth of the matter.

Well, it was one bright morning that Rafael sat outside of his door smoking a cigarette, and he saw there was a great trouble and fluttering in a copse of osiers a little way up the road, a great coming and going and screeching of birds. They made so much noise that at last he went over to find out what it was all about, and there he found a baby boy rolled up in a rich soft blanket, sucking its thumb like a lean dog. Now, Rafael was a good man, and besides it was a very fine red blanket, and so Rafael picked up the

baby and took him back to Catuxa, who was giving nurse to the daughter Conchita that had come to them a month before.

"Here is a baby left to die at the side of the road," says Rafael.

"I see," says Catuxa, "though why you should bring him to me when I've already got nine of your own to take care of and me without complaining a word, *válgame Dios!* If you should let him lie there now, the coach from Ribas will be coming along soon and they will pick him up."

"Would you leave him die there by the road?" says Rafael. "Put him down on the straw, and there will be plenty of what Conchita is getting for him to have a little."

"Did you ever see a fine red blanket like that!" says Catuxa.

So she took the red blanket and put it on Conchita, and she took the old blanket from the little girl and put it on the foundling, and Rafael went off to his work.

They were drinking cider down at Paco's over the mountain when Rafael came in the next Saturday night, and there was an old charcoal burner named Lucas with a squint his mother gave him with a shovel when he was a baby, was telling a strange story; and Rafael went over and listened to it.

"*Ave María de gracia!*" says Lucas. "The devil himself has been picking his apples in our trees. *Aaja!* I was lying asleep, and it was midnight, and I woke up with the moonlight on my face. At first I thought it was the moonlight woke me up, but I lay still, and then I heard a voice; it was the voice that was like moonlight, calling



to me. So I dragged my legs to the door and looked out, and there I saw a lady sitting astride of a great white pig. Holy Mary, she was sitting on a great white pig, and there was white mist in her eyes. In her arms she was carrying a babe that was wrapped in a fine blanket.

"She looked at me and said, 'Lucas, bring me milk for my baby.'

"Then I went back into the house, and I crossed myself when I got in, but it was a very small cross and she didn't see it, and therefore I am alive now tonight. I got some milk in a cup and took it to her, and she gave it to the baby, and when she handed back the cup her hand touched mine, and it was cold as snow. Then she said something to her pig, it might have been 'arre'! but I think it was a grunt that she said to her pig. And she sighed, and she laughed, and then she rode away up the mountain through the woods, singing."

They were for laughing at Lucas, who hadn't so much of a head that he knew his Jesus. But Bartolo pounded the table with his big fist.

"Cá, he isn't bad!" says Bartolo. "I myself saw the lady, but it was a white horse—"

"How do you know it was a horse?" whimpers Lucas. "Did you stand beside her in the moonlight, like I did? It was a pig I saw her seated on, and she talked to it in its own language."

"It might well have been a pig," says Bartolo, "for I didn't go near her. I'm not one that fears the devil, and I'll quarter his ears for the old one himself. And I too woke up that night, and heard a voice calling me by name, and I went to the door, and there she was."

"It was on a white pig she sat," says old Lucas, cracking his thumbs.

"It was on a white pig she sat," says Bartolo. "And 'Bartolo,' she says, 'bring me milk for my baby.' But I says, 'Suckle him yourself, old witch, and God blast you for rousing honest men out of their sleep.' Then I slammed the door in her face and

she rode away; and the very next morning Roseta, my cow, was dead in the *pallar*, puffed out big as a haystack."

"Was it a red blanket she had the baby in?" asks Rafae', trembling a little.

"I couldn't see well in the moonlight," says Bartolo.

"It was a fine red blanket she had it in," says Lucas, "and there isn't another such blanket in all the *comarca*."

Then Rafae' told them about finding the little boy under the osier trees, and they all agreed that this must be the child of the lady on the white pig that sang that night. Rafae' said he would take it the next morning to Pa're Jerónimo, but Lucas cried no.

"Ps-s-s!" says Rafae'. "He will bless it with holy water and if it is the devil it will disappear in smoke."

"And much good that'll do you," whines Lucas. "He'll come back himself to visit you. He'll be walking these roads at night, and the apples will rot, and our cows will die like Bartolo's cow died, all for your foolishness."

This was the thought that stayed in Rafae's mind when he took the road over the mountain to his cabin. He thought of Bartolo's cow that swelled up and died on the very night he insulted the strange lady on the white pig in the moonlight, and he wondered if he himself might not swell up and die likewise. No use to dig for trouble; it'll grow where the seeds fall. So Rafae' told Catuxa the story that Lucas and Bartolo had told, and Catuxa cried, and then she got the devil-baby from the straw and put him in the cradle, and she took Conchita out of the cradle and put her in the straw; and the fine red blanket she took from Conchita and tucked it around the devil-baby.

Rafae' didn't say anything more, but the rest that had been at Paco's did, and all through the *comarca* spread the news. There were many people remembered now they too had seen the lady on her pig, one man was stopped by her on the road, and she asked him



the way to Rafael's house. It came to the ears of Pa're Jerónimo, and he smoked many cigarettes, and wrote the bishop, and finally decided not to bother about the devil-child until he did some mischief. And it came, too, to the ears of Don Pedro, that used to own all these lands around here, but he gamed them away, and drank and whored and lost all he had. And Don Pedro laughed his harsh laugh and cried:

"He is a devil, *bicho*, of course he is a devil; there will be fleas his color in many a girl's hair; and his mother was the loveliest wench in all hell, and I, by God, I am his father!"

## II

WELL, the years dragged along, and Rafael and Catuxa and their brats did the best they could to make Tito comfortable, for fear of offending the old one and swelling up and dying. They weren't very much afraid, at that, for they thought the devil ought to be well pleased with the way Tito was treated. He had the cradle all to himself, and he had first go at Catuxa's breast till he learned to use a bowl, and if there was ever a new shirt for Conchita it was already thin where Tito's elbows had stretched it. Like a cabbage he grew, and when he began to get about on his own feet he found himself master of the house, with everybody running around to wait on him, though they hated him for what he was.

No chance for them to forget that! Didn't Catuxa wake up one night and see with her own eyes a toad come hop right out of the fire, and go over and look into the cradle where Tito was sleeping, and hop right back into the flames? Didn't Tito climb away up into the chestnut tree outside the door, and didn't Catuxa watch him, praying to the Holy Mother he'd fall out of it and kill himself, and didn't he fall out of it and land on his feet on the ground and not so much as whimper?

He was a beautiful boy, they say, was Tito. He had fine curly hair as black as his eyes, and big eyes as black as mushrooms, except they could get red when he was angry, and he was angry whenever anybody crossed him. This was very seldom as nobody dared to cross him, only sometimes it was they didn't move fast enough when he asked for something, or he might ask for a long rifle like Pepe's or a horse and saddle like he would see on the road from Ribas, which Rafael couldn't give him.

All over the mountain Tito wandered. His own brats Rafael made work, but there was no work for Tito. He went away in the morning, and if he didn't get back till midnight, up Catuxa would get and cook him a *tor-tilla* and bring him big cups of milk.

Everywhere he went he did some mischief, and the more trouble he started the more friends Rafael lost. Now and then some prank would make the whole *comarca* wild, like the time when he painted up the Altar of the Blessed Spirits there where the road turns off to Paco's, and put whiskers on the infant Jesus in the Virgin's lap. Not a few said then that Rafael ought to cast the devil-child out, even if it meant his own ruin but Rafael maintained it was the Lord's affair if Tito painted up the altar, and if He didn't like it He could stop it Himself.

So Tito grew to be a lad, and then one Friday night it was he went away and didn't come back. All night Catuxa kept the fire burning for him, but she was praying that Tito would tumble into the Sil and drown. Saturday passed, and Sunday morning, and still no sign of Tito, and that day there was joy in Rafael's house and more joyful they were when Pa're Jerónimo climbed into the pulpit and told a terrible story about the devil-child.

Walking into the church the night before, and all very dark, Pa're Jerónimo had heard a wild laugh. He looked up quick and there, sitting on the rail, was Tito. Pa're Jerónimo took a handful of holy water and threw



it on him, and first he turned into a great black snake that spat on the floor. But Pa're Jerónimo called on the devil to be gone, and made the sign of the cross, whereupon Tito disappeared with a shriek and a clap of thunder, that knocked the pa're down and set the whole church to quaking.

*Ajá!* I'm not one that thinks a man's an angel the minute he puts on a cassock, and Pa're Jerónimo was no better than the pope of Rome; there's many a man has seen him playing the bear in front of a dark window. We're a sober people up here in the north, and we mind our business and go to mass, but we can see by daylight and we know that a man wears trousers till the Lord gives him wings, *caramba!* and many a brat that's born in a bed looks more like the pa're than like papá. And you won't find a pretty girl in all the *comarca* don't know the song they sing that goes:

The pa're he begged me to give him  
A rose, and I says to him then,  
The roses that bloom in my garden  
Won't bloom in a churchyard, Amen!

But Pa're Jerónimo wasn't a liar. And besides, if anybody thinks this isn't the truth, my own mother, *Dios la guarde*, that's been in the grave these seventeen years, heard the thunder-clap when Tito disappeared.

Well, Rafael and Catuxa and the children went home that night praising God that the devil was no more, now that the holy water had destroyed him. But when they stepped into the house, who was there but Tito himself lying on his straw as sweet as a berry, fast asleep. Rafael kicked himself for not bringing home some holy water, but he remembered that Pa're Jerónimo made the cross; so Rafael crossed himself, but it didn't so much as make Tito sneeze, let alone wake him up. They hadn't a Hail Mary more that they dared to say that night, and Catuxa cried to think maybe Tito had seen Rafael cross himself and was just hiding his anger and would do something horrible, and Rafael kept one eye open

till morning watching for Tito to turn into a snake.

Next day Conchita, the little girl, went up the road to pick brambleberries; a pretty child she was with the yellow fennel-flowers in her black hair, and old Lucas came along the road, and saw Tito jump out of a chestnut tree at her, and he hid behind a bush and listened to them talking.

Conchita made the cross, and Tito says, "What do you do that for?"

"People won't hurt you if you do that," says Conchita, very frightened.

"It's better to throw stones," says Tito. "Nobody hurts me," he says, with a strut. "But I've heard my father say bad things about me. Why does he say bad things about me?"

Conchita just shook her head, and Tito says:

"Also I've heard that old fool Pa're Jerónimo say bad things about me. What's all this story of snakes and thunder he tells about me?"

All Conchita did was make the cross again and cry a little, and Tito went on,

"Ps-s-s-s! It was nothing. I was sitting on that fence in front up there, looking at things, when the old pig came in. He called me names and I laughed at him, and then he threw water on me and I ran away. Also I kicked him, and ran away. Why did he throw water on me?"

"Because," says Conchita, "you aren't a Catholic."

"Seven-tailed devil, I am a Catholic!" shouts Tito. "What is a Catholic?"

"You go to church to be a Catholic," says Conchita.

"Well, I will go to church and I will put toads in the water bowl and I will break the colored window," says Tito.

This was too much for Conchita and she fell down on the grass, and then Tito says, "Come, I will not hurt you, Conchita, and I will not kill my father. You are my sweetheart. Let us talk of getting married, and I will show you how high I can jump," says Tito. "Tell me, is my father a king?"



After Lucas told Rafael about what he heard, Rafael lost no chance to beat Conchita, thinking that was one way as good as any to chase the devil out of her, and if he whipped her hard enough he might get deep enough to make the imp smart himself. And Catuxa told Pa're Jerónimo about it, and he gave Conchita the rosary five times every night for the good of her soul. But Conchita used to play with Tito after that, though nobody ever saw them together. For when one morning Tito climbed into the window of the alcalde's house at Ribas and ran away with a silver comb, they looked high and low to find it, and when at last they found it it was in Conchita's hair.

### III

Oh, but he was a somber and a fierce *rapaz*, was Tito! If anyone doubted that he was the spit of the devil, they had only to look at him, with his sharp black eyes and that way he walked, that made people get out of his path. There wasn't a youth in the *comarca*, when Tito grew up, that would stay where he was when he saw Tito coming. And they were polite enough to him, God knows, for it pays to be polite to the old one, even if you get to your knees when he's gone by, for you can't tell whether the good Lord is looking your way when the devil passes.

If there was anybody thought he would make friends with Tito he got over it when he learned what happened to Luis. Luis was a bad one that worked in the sardine factory at Malpica till they found him with some tobacco that had paid no duty, and when he got out of jail he came back to Ribas to bring shame on his father and terror to the *guardia civil*.

One day Luis says to a friend of his:

"If Tito's the devil then he must be looking for me, and I should be looking for him; for there's one thing I should like to know, and that is how to turn into a thunderclap when I feel

a hand on my collar. There's others that have sold their souls, and maybe enough of mine is left to trade for the trick."

So Luis lights a cigarette and away he walks, and in time he comes across Tito, and that night Lucas going home full of Paco's cider stumbles over Luis lying flat on the road. And Luis told Lucas that when he asked Tito how to turn into a thunderclap, Tito laughed and laughed and laughed, and then, *sambomba!* he showed him how, and knocked Luis into a bad dream, and it was two weeks before the glory left his eye that was as big as a red cabbage.

We don't breed *toreros* up here in the north, like they do in Andalucía. We're a sober people; we raise our apples and drink our cider and cut our wood; there's food for a year to come in every man's *cabosa*, and we don't take to fine clothes or pigtails. Jose-lito, who comes from Sevilla, they have his picture down there and they call it "San Juan de Triana"; but the best way to get to be a saint here is to go to mass. However, Ribas spawned El Bobo, and if he wasn't the most skilful *matador* in the world, there's not one had more courage than he had.

Well, one day El Bobo came back to Ribas to show the people what a great man he was. They had a big fair, and El Bobo killed a couple of old cows that were the best could be found for him, and that day the people forgot for a while that El Bobo was a lazy scamp that ran away from home before he was ten and only got to be a bull-fighter because he hadn't brains enough to beg. All the *nenas* danced with him that night, but among them all there wasn't one that was so handsome a girl as Conchita. El Bobo liked her too; he killed a thousand bulls with pretty words that night, and all for her. And when, in the middle of the evening, Conchita disappeared, El Bobo was wild, and swore he'd cut the ears off the man that ran away with her.

They waited for Conchita to come back, but she didn't come, and little by



little the people began to go home, for it was getting late, and the good folk that stayed began to whisper this was another job of Tito's; for nothing could go wrong in the *comarca* but everybody knew who was to blame. And then too hadn't some of them seen him, come to think about it, standing off by himself under the trees, watching the dance, and hadn't he a scowl on his face like Don Juan Tenorio on All Souls' Day?

El Bobo said he wasn't afraid, and sneered at the others, and out he set to find Tito and take Conchita away from him. In half an hour he came back, and his face was green like Mary's cheek on the Altar of the Blessed Spirits. All he would do was point to the path he came from, and he went into Paco's and drank until he fell down on the floor. *Ave Maria purissima*, the very next *corrida* El Bobo took part in, he got a long horn in his gizzard.

But now curiosity overcame the fear of the folk that were left, and they went poking up the side of the hill where he pointed. Pretty soon they began to hear a strange music, and when at last they came to the edge of a clearing that was full of moonlight, what did they see but a man and a girl dancing around in the moonlight, and one of them was Tito and the other one was Conchita. Bartolo said it was Tito that was singing for them to dance by, but Lucas said it was the strange lady on the white pig come back that was playing the bagpipes; and that's the truth, for that very night, afterward, more than one of the people going home caught a glimpse of her riding along the mountain on her pig, and those that didn't see her heard her piping on the *gaita*.

That night Rafael vowed it was either him or the devil. He went to Pa're Jerónimo in the morning and told him what had happened, and Pa're Jerónimo, shook all over but he said he would come and bless Rafael's house.

It was quite a procession that started across the mountain. There

was Pa're Jerónimo trudging along in front with his hyssop in one hand and his Bible in the other, and a cigarette between his lips, and his broad black hat on the back of his head. It was a long way back from Pa're Jerónimo to Rafael, and right behind Rafael came Catuxa saying her beads with her fingers and "*ay de mí*" with her mouth; and then it was a long way back from Catuxa to the rest of the crowd, with Lucas hobbling along behind.

It looked like there would be God is Christ for Tito if they found him. *Aajá!* and they did find him, too, sitting on the grass in front of Rafael's, with Conchita lying asleep and her head in his lap. Pa're Jerónimo stopped and the cigarette fell out of his mouth, and Rafael stopped, and Catuxa stopped, and nobody said a word for a minute, while Tito stared back at them. That very minute clouds passed in front of the sun and it got dark as night, when there hadn't been a wisp in the sky a minute before. Then Pa're Jerónimo crossed himself.

At that, very carefully Tito puts Conchita's head on the grass, without waking her, and gets to his feet.

"Well?" he says. Just that . . . "Well?"

So Pa're Jerónimo waves the hyssop round his head and lets fly a regular rain of holy water, and says something in this Latin that they speak in the church. Whenever a drop of water hit Tito it sputtered like spit on the stove and you could smell sulphur under Paco's table at the cross-roads. The wind began to whip through the trees, and lightning flared and thunder boomed, and Tito changed first into a lion and then into a lizard, and then into a great red fly, and then into a fire, and then at last back into himself. There he was, scratching up great hunks of earth with his claws, and snarling till you couldn't hear the thunder. It was so dark you couldn't see your hand in front of your face, and Lucas plainly saw in back of Tito the figure of the old one himself, knocking his fist, and his long tail switching



around him. But Pa're Jerónimo swung the hyssop and shouted for the devil to depart.

All of a sudden the cloud disappeared, the sun shone again, and when Lucas looked up out of his collar Tito had vanished, and there was Conchita lying on the grass, sleeping as if nothing had really happened. And, *válgame Dios!* where Tito had been standing there wasn't a blade of grass left, and the ground was baked as hard as brick. *Ajá!*

Well, they woke Conchita up, and she looked all around, frightened; and "Where's Tito?" says she. "I brought him home for he promised he would go down to the church tomorrow and get baptized; and we are going to be married."

"Daughter," says Pa're Jerónimo, picking up his hat from the grass where he had knocked it off with his hyssop, "you have listened to the deceits of the fiend himself. Confess and repent, lest the flames of hell burn you forever more!"

But all Conchita did was cry, and Rafael took her by the arm and led her into the house, while the people, with old Lucas jibbering along in front, went back down the mountain.

#### IV

FROM that day on Rafael was a different man, and Catuxa was a different woman, and Conchita, that was always meek as a mallow, got fierce as Tito himself. You might hear her singing inside when you passed the house, strange music that hadn't any beginning or end she would sing, or you would hear her laugh, wild and hard. But if she put her head out of a window you would see her face was white as the ghost's hand without any body to it that picks four-leaf clovers in the churchyard on Saint John's night. Rafael went less and less often to Paco's for a glass of cider, and finally he didn't go at all; and when Catuxa had to go to Ribas she kept her

shawl about her head and tried not to speak to anybody.

But there were few enough in the *comarca*, indeed, that would speak to Catuxa, for it got to be whispered around that every morning before dawn the devil's brat would come back to Rafael's house and all day long he would stay there, and terrible things went on. And that was the truth of the matter, for I have it from Pa're Jerónimo himself, and a priest that tells a lie forgets the Credo and never again can he say Mass.

*Ajá!* It was plain enough from the things that happened in the neighborhood that the old one himself was about. It wasn't a month after they threw the holy water on Tito that old Zacarías, the bone-setter, a sober and a kindly man he was that never smiled at all for thinking of the sorrow there is in the world, was found in his bed one morning with a wicked grin cut in his throat. Not a month after that Pepe's girl that lived over the Sil took to her bed and brought forth three daughters, and on the little breast of each one of them was the print of a hoof, that faded dim every morning, but every night burned red as fire. There was so much rain that summer it ruined many a garden, but more than one well went dry in spite of that. Oh, there was plenty to show for the devil's favors, and it wasn't long before the whole *comarca* shunned Rafael and Catuxa like the plague was on them.

Rafael's orchard grew high with weeds, and his house was neglected until it looked as if nobody lived there. His apples fell to the ground and most of them rotted where they fell. Only a few baskets ever got down the mountain to Ribas, and they were poisonous sour, and nobody would eat them but Don Pedro, that blasphemer, who smacked his lips, and laughed his great harsh laugh, and said they tasted like a nun's kiss.

It was Michaelmas the year after Pa're Jerónimo went up the mountain with his hyssop to chase the devil out of Rafael's house, that Lucas drank even



more than usual down at Paco's, and he was telling all over again to some travelers the story of Tito, and he got too scared to go home. He stayed and stayed, but at last Paco put him out and locked the door behind him. It was a dark night, and Lucas looked at the sky, and he saw there wasn't a moon or a star in it. There was something strange about it, though, that Lucas didn't like. He shivered and crossed himself, but there was no getting over the mountain by Ave Marias, and finally he set off.

As soon as he reached the ridge he saw that the trouble in the sky came from Rafael's cabin, that was burning down the road, and when he got there he found Rafael and Catuxa sitting on the grass, watching the smoke surge up. It wasn't of his own will that he stayed to listen to them, but his legs let go beneath him and down he went with a gasp.

"*Ay de mi!*" wailed Catuxa, rocking back and forth with her head in her hands. "What's to become of us now?"

Rafael spat on the ground.

"What matter?" he says. "For Tito will bother us never again. *Ajá!*" says Rafael, turning to Lucas, that was whimpering with fear. "I watched him lying there on the straw with those black eyes of him shut, and I thought of all the evil he had brought on us. So I got my knife and crept closer and closer, very quiet, and then I jumped on him. . . . It was the devil that screamed in him the way he did."

"And Conchita is dead, dead!" moans Catuxa. "She is burned up, *pobre de mi*, my baby, my baby!"

But Rafael scowls. "She gave her-

self to the devil, and she would have held me back," says Rafael. "For when she saw me creep across the floor where he was lying, she threw herself upon me. Just as I slipped the knife into his shirt, she flung herself upon me, and—"

"Round and round they tumbled," says Catuxa, "and I tried to make her stop, *María Madre de Dios*, I tried, but she wouldn't listen to me, and now she is dead!"

"She put her teeth in my arm till I felt the blood spurt," says Rafael. "Then I struck her away from me, and she reeled into the table, where the lamp was burning. . . ."

With a crash, the roof of the cabin fell in. A gush of smoke and sparks rose into the sky, and Lucas looked up. There, blacker than the night itself, he saw a great figure, a giant it was, head and shoulders above the chestnut tree in front of the door that the fire had withered away. On top of a red flame it stood, and it danced a crazy *muñeira*, twisting and swaying and reaching its long arms down toward Rafael and Catuxa. Its face was the face of Tito, but its eyes were large as moons and swimming with white mist.

And that was the last Lucas remembered. They found him lying there paralyzed on all one side of him, gibbering to himself, the next morning when the coach came by from Ribas. Rafael and Catuxa they did not find, nor were they ever seen again in the *comarca*, and never did word come from them where they had gone. But if you ask me, I think the road they took that night grows no such flowers as ours, and God forfend we ever have to follow them!





## Fem-America

[A compilation from the *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Woman's Home Companion*, *Delineator*, *McCall's*, *Pictorial Review* and *Good Housekeeping*]

By Elizabeth Dickens

HOWEVER, the mind of Jessie Conrad was not crippled. When the accident came that tied her to her bed for years and apparently for her whole life, she set to work sorting the recipes which she had gathered from all parts of the world and making them into a cook book. . . . This remark is significant from more than one point of view, and it is certainly encouraging to feel that women are no longer puppets in the hands of fashion, since they demand not only charm and beauty but practicality in their clothes. . . . In a magnificent moment Paul Poiret created a dress of gold net, embroidered with consummate art with green, pink, and yellow silk flowers. There is but one sleeve. . . . There seems to be only one remedy: to improve the quality of our men, thus increasing the number that are marriageable. If we can do this, we may do more than solve the problem of the spinster. We may find that we have also enlarged the size of families by producing men of sufficient manhood to stir maternal instincts, and of sufficient ability and character to shoulder the responsibilities of a family, thus making motherhood less of a hardship and gamble to their wives. . . . In Iowa City there is a woman mayor, and there the best progress anywhere is being made in the care of babies. In Des Moines it is almost impossible to find a woman who does not belong to a club or a group of clubs. . . . Please give me a rime

for an invitation to a bridegroom's shower. . . . When you are putting the finishing touches to your toilet—giving your nose a last touch of powder, your eyebrows a final brush—remember also to put a drop of perfume behind the ears and at the nape of the neck. . . . The unworthy criticism of your stories irritated me at first. But there! some of us will find fault with heaven, I expect. . . . Sweeping, mopping floors, making beds can be made real beauty exercises if the motions are rightly done. Try doing them to music with your windows wide open. . . . Let the last waking thought be that tomorrow you are going to be more charming than ever—and you will be! . . . Only two per cent of the women wanted suffrage. Yet it is these glorious Two Per Cents that are the leaven of the earth, and that have transformed us from brute beasts into a world of civilization—and wealth and ease and art, and let us hope, peace and good-will on earth. . . . The woman who has determined on one special odor for regular use, wisely keeps a few other perfumes on hand for those moments when her spirit craves the tonic, or it may be the quieting influence, of a contrasting fragrance. . . . I buy nineteen magazines every month—from movies to radio—but the *Woman's Home Companion* is my favorite, always was, and always will be. I enjoy everything in it, but have especially enjoyed the articles by Frederick L.



Collins, "What's Happened to Royalty?" as there is a very romantic streak in me that just soaks up information about kings and queens. . . . Then cleanse every bit of powder and dust off your face with little puffs of absorbent cotton soaked in some heavenly scented face tonic, patting it on with an upward motion. . . . These women were demonstrating the prin-

ciple of intelligent democracy. A phenomenon such as this gathering of the League of Women Voters is rare in this country. It is probably not possible in any other. These are the ditchers and diggers. Led by Mrs. Maud Wood Park, who is renowned as a legislative lobbyist, they have acted, and talked none at all.



## Ballad of Sir Pertinax

*By Basil Thompson*

SIR PERTINAX FOLDOLDEROL,  
Chamberlain to the King,  
Loved himself, the legend runs,  
Better than anything.  
Lords and Ladies the country over  
Pronounced Sir Pert the perfect lover.

Came a day, heigh! lackaday,  
His Majesty expired.  
"The King is dead! Long live the King!"  
The sweating yeomen choired.  
Ladies and lords, with stiffened backs,  
Looked askance on Sir Pertinax.

Sir Pertinax astride his jennet,  
Fittingly garbed in dark brocade,  
Viewed the obsequies of his regent  
Plainly undismayed.  
Lords and ladies, however curt,  
Were unable to vex the bland Sir Pert.

In seemly raiment and properly sad,  
Sitting a nervous stallion,  
Rode yesterday's Prince, the King today,  
A comely enough rapscallion.  
Ladies and lords were quick to surmise  
Whose breed paraded in kingly guise.

Sir Pertinax Foldolderol,  
Servitor to his son,  
Loved himself, the legend recites,  
Better than anyone.  
Chroniclers, though ever so keen,  
Are often obtuse to the whim of a Queen.





# Carry Me Back

By Nancy Hoyt

I

THE rain seeped persistently down the collar of her coat, ran perversely up her wrists and squashed in the soles of her thin shoes. Not a driving rain or a fierce, sharp spatter, but a sleek, monotonous downpour, that never stopped or let up. At four o'clock it was already dark and the lamps on the buses made reflections in the puddles of the shining wet streets. Looking back at the departing bus, Lucy felt she had been abandoned by the only bright warm thing in the whole dripping square. Climates should be warm and wet or cold and dry; it was not fair to have a climate that soaked and shivered at the same time. Even in this rain the yellow fog still hung in the alleys and narrow streets to choke the unwary when they least expected it. It was hard to see the beauty of London when you had such bad chilblains and yet she had to admit that in a subtle, smoky way it was very beautiful. The dim street lamps, the shadowy trees, were all strange and mysterious seen through the fog and wet. But she was almost childishly frightened of some of the trees in these squares she was walking through. Deformed and distorted, where branches had been lopped off, they seemed to lift ugly faces at her, like Rackham's witch trees. But it was certainly foolish to be so scared of them.

"Lucy Lockett, be ashamed of yourself," she scolded and passed the trees calmly by, fixing her eyes on a light shining through green curtains in someone's front door. She always called herself by both names, in fact, her last

name seemed to belong naturally with the first so that one never thought of them separately. Well, if you'd been Lucy Lockett for twenty years you naturally remembered it; affectionate teasing about dropping an empty pocket-book and being hailed cheerfully by long lank youths, gathered around a crap game—"Come on, Lady Luck, make these babies five for me. Do I five—do I five? Phoebe it is, sure 'nuff! Didn't I tell you Lady Luck was goin' to get her for me?"

She wondered if she would get used to a new name—Lucy Richardson wasn't going to be the same, it sounded like a different person. Then the picture of the crap game faded and she remembered that she was in a dark little street near Belgrave Square, that her umbrella leaked, and her inadequate shoes were soaked through. "A demmed, damp, moist, unpleasant body." She regarded the wet slippers ruefully. They were foolish in this climate, but at home she had been proud of her small feet and had always worn high-heeled little shoes made of satin or thin leather. What a woe-begone frivolity they expressed here. Would she soon be wearing stout brogues, sensibly made, as Lady Richardson so often had advised?

The flat of her prospective mother-in-law was near Eton Square in a short street that held the fog and was dark even on a fine day. The gloomy outlook, Lady Richardson considered, was made up for by the smart location and correct address which read pleasantly on her blue note paper.

At the entrance the porter, an old man in a black shirt and waistcoat,



came out of his little den and ushered Lucy into the lift.

"Nahsty day, Miss," he said, pulling on the cord which sent the lift up, creaking. For which remark and service he knew he would receive a sixpence and a smile. She was a nice young lady but a bit down in the mouth today.

As she stepped out of the lift he noticed that the coin in his hand was a shilling. He wondered why she had given it to him—absent-minded-like he fancied.

She stood on the landing and watched the lift descend between the twisting stairs.

Again she had the feeling that the departing bus had given her—that of being left deserted and forlorn in an unknown and possibly hostile spot. The cards on the three doors facing her she read carefully, and amused herself by guessing the characters of their owners. The Misses Walsingham were probably spinsters of the high-nosed, "as our dear father always said" type, and Colonel and Mrs. Dresser were a middle-aged couple, he a rotund, rosy man with a military mustache.

Moving over to the third door she pressed the electric bell and was soon standing in Lady Richardson's front hall among the umbrellas and outer wraps of her guests. Parton, the parlor maid, pointing to a covered dish in her hand, said,

"You'll excuse my answering the door, miss, with the muffins in my hand, but I was just bringing them into the drawing-room when the bell rang."

From a closed door at the end of the passage she could hear the delicate clinking and clatter of tea things. Opening the door ahead of her, the offending muffins having been first carefully deposited on a table, Parton announced "Miss Lockett" in her mincing, drawing-room voice.

Lucy came into the room shyly and walked over to Lady Richardson at the fireplace. It was beautifully warm and bright in here. The six ladies assembled gave forth a mingled chattering of little well-bred laughs and polite ex-

clamations of interest. The whole outside world of dank cold was shut out from this gay and cozy room of patterned chintz, Chelsea china figures and shining tea things. But Lucy felt cold and bent her hands to the coals.

"Feeling chilly, dear?" said Lady Richardson kindly. "Then come near and warm up."

"I think I'm getting 'flu," she answered, "I feel sort of funny all over."

"A touch of liver, probably," suggested a lady with gray feathers in an imposing hat. The feathers trembled slightly whenever she spoke. "So usual this time of year."

"A touch of liver" seemed to be usual almost any time of year, thought Lucy. Almost as universal as roast mutton and brussels sprouts.

"I wonder why liver is so popular here," she asked. "Now at home, you hardly ever hear about it. Appendicitis is the fashion and other parts of your insides, but never liver."

"Insides?" said the gray-feather lady vaguely, and she looked slightly shocked.

"Lucy was joking," Lady Richardson explained.

Poor thing, thought Lucy, she is always trying to explain me. But kind, very kind.

"Oh," said Mrs. Wetherill, relieved.

Now the warmth of the room felt almost oppressive. It wasn't the room really that was so hot, it was she herself; she felt her cheeks and found them burning. The parrots on the chintz and the china figurines on the mantelpiece swam before her eyes. Mrs. Meredith, a handsome woman in a tailored suit, wearing a single glass, surveyed her carefully through it.

"You look very well, Miss Lockett," she said, "you've a good color today."

"Have I?" said Lucy dully. Then suddenly, half unconscious of what she was saying, "Oh, I want to go home. I want to go home, back to Virginia!"

The ladies looked startled. She could see Mrs. Meredith's eye-glass drop out of place in blank astonishment. But she didn't much care because her head



ached so. "Carry me back to old Virginny." You didn't have to talk, you got carried back without effort, just letting things slide.

"Naturally becomes lonely for home at times," Lady Richardson's smooth voice was explaining, "studies art and lives with Mrs. Cape, *such* a nice woman, always has an American girl staying with her."

The headache was terrible. If Ronnie were here—but even if he were, he would suggest a brisk walk or a canter in the country. Besides he was annoyed with her when she was homesick.

"Of course," said a kindly lady, fixing Lucy with amiable eyes, "we know that Virginia isn't like the other States. More feudal, isn't it, with beautiful estates and—er—peasants? So interesting about that general in your war. And I always think of those quaint faithful negro servants."

Lucy wanted to say, "It isn't like that, not a bit. Johnnie Buford comes in and helps my father work the farm but he's just as nice kind of people as we all, and the only nigger we get is Claudia, who's seventeen and gets more uppity every day but she's better'n most at that. It isn't a bit like you think it is but it's lovely all the same, in its own dirty old way."

She did start to say it, but the lady was getting up and moving toward the piano, "just to cheer you up," she called to Lucy over her shoulder.

The lady was playing Dixie on the piano, playing it rather haltingly and badly, but still playing it.

*"Way down South where I was born in  
Early on a frosty mornin'"*

Lucy was up, stumbling stupidly, making absurd apologies; she was out in the hall snatching at a coat; she was rushing, tripping, half-falling in a headlong hurry to get down those stairs. Home, she was going home.

## II

THE road between Fairfax and Aldie was barricaded at one point with a small wooden sign that said on one side, "CLOSED PENDING

TEMPORARY REPAIRS," and on the other, "CLOSED—ROAD UNDER CONSTRUCTION, TAKE DETOUR." When Sam was in a good temper and felt like working he set it up temporary side out and waved to the cars to pass on, but this being a warm May afternoon, he felt inclined to dawdle and so spitefully put out the detour side while he patched a hole at the side of the macadam. The system was not particularly effectual as all the local cars disregarded either sign and passed blithely through, leaving Sam leaning on his pick and glaring after them. He derived some small satisfaction, however, from watching disappointed tourists turn out of their way and proceed down one of the worst detours in Virginia. Hearing a noise approaching, Sam looked up hopefully, only to be left cussing impotently as a Ford rattled past the sign, skipped impertinently near him, while two laughing faces grinned at his annoyance.

"Never saw anyone act crazier than that girl Lucy Lockett," said Sam resentfully. "Soon as she got over bein' so sick, she started runnin' round with Johnnie Buford and the Randolph boys again. Pneumonia!—huh, she's gettin' well pretty quick, I reckon."

Harris Jackson, leisurely engaged in stringing out a long lunch hour by taking very slow bites of a big sandwich, looked up to the hot intensity of the May sky and kicked lazily at a clump of grass.

"She's kind of crazy, sure 'nuff, since she got back from England. Always goin' round now sayin' how pretty everything is," he said.

Sam grunted, still irritated by their wanton disregard of his sign.

"Las' week I met her down yonder near the store, standing in front of where all the hawks are, lookin' at 'em," Harris went on. "Those hawks are the laziest bunch you ever saw. First they roll 'round in the mud till they're all yella' and then they lie in the sun while it dries. Well, what do you 'spose that girl said? She turned round to me and said perfectly seriously, 'Aren't they sweet?'"



# Futility

By Nunnally Johnson

SHE was driving me mad. Her voice droned on continuously, monotonously, never ending.

"Did you hear?" she began.

"I did!"

"Did you hear that Marinoble Beryl of the Notorious Players is engaged to Harold Black of the Superfilms?"

"I am reading an article by Paul Rosenfeld," I explained. "I am trying to understand it. Will you excuse me for possibly an hour?"

"They say," she went on, as if I had not spoken, "that she is already living with him. They say . . ."

The words beat on my ears, numbing my brain. I was her husband and her legally appointed audience. Day after day, night after night, undiscouraged, unendingly, she brought to me the chit-chat of the movie magazines.

"They say . . ."

I set my jaw, I ground my teeth, I gripped the arm of my chair. With all the power of which I was capable I held myself in check. Tonight, it seemed, my nerves were particularly raw. The thump-thump of movie facts on my tortured mind was driving me insane.

"They say that Harold Black of the Superfilms . . ."

I could stand no more. I rose, leaped across the room, and snatched up the heavy coal shovel from off the divan. Red filled my eyes. Confusion thundered in my ears. I raised the shovel and brought it down with all my strength, straight across the middle of her bean.

"They say . . ."

The words came evenly from her lips, as I stood dazed, studying the bent and bruised remains of the shovel in my hands.



# Question

By Bernice L. Kenyon

*WHEN your wide gestures lie composed  
To smooth and gracious lines,  
And mockingly the night puts by  
Your strength, and peace defines  
The texture of your voice, I ask:  
What secret do you hold,  
That all the day you wear yourself  
Mighty, and harsh, and cold?*



# Happy Birthday!

By Carlotta Greet

I

HAVING placed the last amber pin in her hair and adjusted the bright green girdle on her sloe-colored dress, Caroline turned to the rug and picked it up gently. It was a beautiful thing—Scotch plaid on one side and a plain serviceable brown on the other.

"There isn't a better quality in the store—you can believe me or not," the salesman assured her. "No, nor in the whole town you won't run across a niftier—all wool and light as a feather. Just the thing for the car!"

Caroline had blushed at that word "car" and had paid for it hastily. "Car" was a pretentious word for a little tin Lizzie. Perhaps the rug was pretentious too. But then she wasn't buying it for the Lizzie—she was buying it for Paul. It was Paul's birthday.

Caroline had never bought a present for a man before. Only boxes of cigars for her father at Christmas. She had brooded over Paul's present for days. Now she opened the rug and spread it wide, covering the counterpane of her narrow white bed. How big and warm it was—the rich fringe fell to the floor and trailed a little along the matting.

It was funny how she had come to think of a rug. The little Ford had nothing to do with it really. Nothing at all. It was only the excuse. Paul always sat in the driver's seat and he couldn't very well use a rug like that there. But as she had wandered through the stores, wondering and wondering what to buy—something that wouldn't look too expensive—after all she had known him for so short a time—it wasn't as if they were engaged or any-

thing—she had come upon the rugs. She had stood there pinching them shyly, feeling the blues, the golden browns, the reds. They made her remember. . . .

Oh, the red and golden brown splotches of the trees as they spun along the road—was it only two weeks ago? It had been perfect. When she came from the office that Saturday noon, there was Paul sitting at the wheel of the little Ford—and there was the wedge-shaped hat of his old-maid sister in the back seat beside the black-and-white striped beard of their old father. They had driven to the lake, she and Paul singing every song they knew. Even old Mr. Davis had chimed in at "Where's My Wandering Boy Tonight" and Elly had unpinned her prim veil, coming in on the chorus of "School Days, School Days, Happy, Golden School Days," with a mournful humming.

And the lake had been beautiful! It was evening and the water was speckled with the long slim boats of the boating crew who had come for the races on the next day. The Ford had stuck and they had all piled out—Elly standing in the dust full of advice to Paul who sweated and writhed and came up at last all grimy.

"No use—got to stay the night," he had grinned and Elly had fussed and protested but Caroline just stood there—happy—happy.

Then there was the moment when they didn't know where they should sleep. Not a room to be had! It looked as if they should have to cast their lot with the boat crew and all sleep in the hay in the barn! But Elly put her foot down on *that*.



"The idea—with all those boys—besides, we'd all take our death of cold. Paul you've just got to get one of the villagers to take us in."

And one of the villagers had taken them in. Caroline and Elly were shut into a room that was almost filled with a bed and two pillows, as hard and roundish as great goose eggs. Paul and the father were put up on two chairs and a sofa in the sitting-room.

Elly had tussled with her shoes and struggled with her corsets and had emerged at last on the moon-lighted bed as flat and quiet as an old paper doll. But Caroline lay with her eyes wide open. The shadows of her arms fell across the whiteness of the bed as she slowly lifted them. They seemed to beckon to the darker shadows of her breasts. Down the road the boat crew was singing and the night through the open window came like honey. The moon fell full upon the bed and upon Caroline's lifted face. She opened her lips and it seemed as if she could taste it.

From the other room she could hear Paul turning restlessly on his creaky chairs. Soon the bright night became very still—only the whauk-whauk of the frogs and now and then as if in answer the creaking of poor Paul's chairs. It was as if the night and the frogs called to Paul who answered but could not get away. She too wanted to call to Paul until the silent and sleeping Elly seemed only a shadow and the walls of the room were shadows and she and Paul were the only real things in the world.

In the morning they had come out to the cool road and she and Paul had looked at each other, very sleepy, blinking in the light as prisoners do who have been sitting in the dark too long. And they had laughed a little, with a laugh that had seemed to Caroline to wrap them round as if they were closed in together somewhere far away, and the old man laboring into the back seat and the stiff armed woman flipping dust from her sleeve were only wooden fig-

ures and had nothing to do with them or life at all. . . .

Caroline liked to remember that moment. She held to it now as she gathered the rug on her arm and slowly left the room. Paul was fond of his little Ford—he kept it sleek and shining as a jetty beetle—the rug would please him, surely. But beyond that, would he understand?

Just what it was she wanted him to understand she didn't know. But since that night in the villager's cottage she felt differently about everything. That moment in the road had taught her happiness. Now she was grateful that Paul's birthday had come so soon. It gave her the excuse to do something for him and she wanted to squander. From a practical point of view the rug was as useless as a poem—it was far too grand for the little Ford, but nothing could be fine enough for Paul. She rejoiced in her lavishness. The fact that she had spent without reckoning the cost seemed strangely significant—and she had thought about it so much that the rug seemed a symbol—even the colors had a meaning—they were like the bright leaves of the trees on that happy road.

These days, when she came to her room in the evening she didn't just sit—trying not to remember how her father had looked when he died—she wasn't afraid any more. It was nice to have a little room—the walls seemed to lean down and talk to you. They would listen gently to thoughts of pleasant things.

## II

CAROLINE walked the short distance between her house and Paul's place self-consciously. She hoped no one was looking. The rug seemed very conspicuous as it hung across her arm. Suppose Elly came to the door? Or the Dad? She didn't want them to see the rug first.

The door to the big old house stood open, as if it were waiting for her. Caroline tiptoed into the hallway. It



was empty and still. Through one open door she could see the dining table set with all the silver and the cut glass vase in the center. The last sun was coming through the windows and the glass sparkled like little diamonds. Caroline's heart thumped with excitement. At the end of the hall in the tall mirror she could see a young woman standing—did she really look like that? She wished she didn't look so shy—but her hair was lovely and she was slim and young. Above the dark folds of the rug her eyes peered solemnly. Nonsense—it was foolish to feel like that. Silly—who was going to eat you? She walked boldly through the wide door into the living-room.

There he lay with his eyes closed on the couch. It was perfect. She couldn't believe her luck. She tiptoed over gently, oh, so gently. The roses at her waist nodded and approved. Carefully now—not to waken him. Just to cover him quietly—and warmly. Oh—

"Oh—hello Caroline—what's up?" said Paul, opening his eyes suddenly and staring very brightly at her.

"Nothing," stammered Caroline. "Oh—happy birthday, Paul!"

"Thanks—" yawned Paul, stretching lazily. "Oh what the dickens is this?" He sat up, wide awake now, and examined the covering.

"It's for your little tin Lizzie, Paul. *Someone* should remember her on your birthday, so I thought I—" began Caroline, trying to laugh.

"Well that's great—but—it's a whale of a present—even for the faithful Elizabeth." Paul was on his feet now, holding the rug awkwardly.

"You shouldn't have blown yourself for so swell a thing as this," he went on, soberly. He couldn't look at her. He just couldn't. There she stood, her face eager and waiting. Oh, damn birthdays!

Caroline turned toward the kitchen. "I'll see if I can help Elly," she said. Her voice sounded far away, as if another girl speaking from the distance of many rooms, was saying the words. She walked through the dining-room

with its white table with all the festive bits of diamonds. She went slowly, but Paul stood moodily looking out of the window, his hands thrust deep into his pockets. She hesitated at the kitchen door, but he did not call her back.

### III

THE dinner party was a great success. Everybody said so. With chairs pushed back from the table they played with coffee spoons and toasted Paul in loganberry juice.

"Here's looking at you," said Carl, who worked in the same office with Paul.

"Here's to you," chimed Mrs. Tappan.

"Happy days," boomed Mr. Tappan, mournfully, sipping loganberry juice.

"Happy birthday, brother," said Elly, gazing sentimentally at Paul. Only a short time ago he was a little fellow and then poor mama had died. What would have become of him if he had not had a big sister? True, she had sacrificed all for him—given up her life. She sighed happily.

"A long life—and a happy one, son," said old Mr. Davis, fondly. "We're a great family," he went on, looking around the table searchingly. "Yes, you don't see many like us nowadays—so fond of each other—we like to be together. We're a unit, so to speak. Yes, we're a unit."

"United we stand, divided we fall—eh Dad?" twitted Paul wittily. Everyone roared appropriately. Paul always was the life of the party.

Caroline sat quietly. No one seemed to notice that she said nothing. Paul and Carl were talking "shop"; Elly was making a delicate concoction called cambric tea for old Mr. Davis; the Tappans, stimulated by an audience were playfully affectionate.

Caroline wondered if the Tappans were very fond of one another. Soon they would go home together. The house would be dark and then the lights would flare up, first downstairs, then upstairs. Then all would be dark and



quiet again. This was a simple fact—all over the town, all over the world, things like that were happening. But Caroline never got used to the idea. Not quite. It was curious and wonderful. People living together—belonging to each other—doing things for one another. Running up and down stairs to fetch things—calling to one another and laughing.

These things were going on—around her—outside of her. But why wasn't there a place for her too? Must she look on always—all her life? Oh say something to her. Somebody say something to her. Paul would not look at her. It was as if he were punishing her for giving.

"What do you say to a little music, folks?" asked Paul. "Bought a dandy new record today. Say, wait till you hear it—you can't keep your feet still."

Everyone rose with relief and moved toward the living-room.

Would anyone sit on the couch? There in a dark brown huddle, was the rug. Caroline hung back. She didn't want to be there when it was found by someone. She would stand here by the dining-room table and pretend to be smelling the flowers. . . . Now Mr. Tappan sits down heavily on the corner of the couch. Mrs. Tappan perches dutifully beside him. The rug is hidden from sight. . . .

Through the door to the hall she could see Paul putting the new record on the Victrola. She and Paul had moved the Victrola to the hall only a week ago because the floor was dark and smooth there and hidden from the living-room by heavy velour curtains. Perhaps he would come to her now—and they could dance together. Oh surely he would and then it would be all right again. It was only her imagination—things were really simple. It was only people's minds that made things seem so complicated and hard.

Bzz-zz went the needle blurring across the disk. And now the doorbell rang, sweetly and insistently. Paul stopped the needle and almost slid across the floor. He flung open the door.

Someone was coming in, a slender, dark girl in a lilac colored dress. Voices in the living-room were suddenly hushed.

"Why—it's Esther!" called Paul, dragging her in by the hand. "Look here—here's Esther! How's that for a birthday present—" he laughed happily.

She was tall, almost as tall as Paul and they moved together across the hall toward the living-room lightly and easily—as if they were used to walking together, as if they liked it, as if they would go on liking it, all their lives.

The living-room was a confusion of voices.

"Mrs. Tappan, meet Esther—she's been East with her mother for ages—You must tell us all about it, Esther." Elly's voice was high with excitement.

"We're all glad to see you, Esther, my girl," old Mr. Davis was saying in his patriarchal manner.

"How's little ole New Yawk?" demanded Carl, and "Now, now," put in Mr. Tappan, "We don't care about New York, but how's—you know—" and he wet his lips and closed his eye and made a gesture as if drinking from a bottle.

"Well, I guess Esther is more interested in clothes than in your old poison," interrupted Mrs. Tappan, with a look that implied secrets only women understood were now afoot.

"Did you see any fashion shows?" she went on, "I'd like to know whether skirts are going to be long or short this winter?"

Esther was standing in the midst of them, her eyes bright and confident—answering Elly with a pressure of the hand, smiling affectionately at old Mr. Davis, laughing back at Carl and Mrs. Tappan. But all the time she could look over the dun colored head of Elly and over the tortoise shell comb of Mrs. Tappan, straight at Paul. And Paul was looking straight at her, not as he had looked at Caroline that long, long ago in the road, but wonderfully—wonderfully.

Caroline buried her nose deep in the flowers on the dining-room table. Where to go? Out of the house—some-where—then to run and run—far away.



"Oh Caroline—" Elly was calling, "Wherever are you?"

"Why, look at her—all by herself in the dining-room. Must I come and get you?" called Paul's happy voice.

And he did come and get her. He took hold of her arm and pressed it affectionately and warmly.

"Don't be such a mouse, Caroline. Why don't you come and meet Esther?"

Now he was drawing her forward. Old Mr. Davis smiled benignly. Elly fell back.

"Esther—you must meet Caroline," he said, pulling her sleeve gently as she stood lightly bantering with the gallant Mr. Tappan. "Esther—" his voice insisted tenderly, proprietorially. "Look—Esther—here's our friend Caroline."

"Caroline—" he went on relentlessly—"is a great friend of the family!"

Caroline felt that everyone must be looking at her. That they could see through her smiling face and find her misery. But no one was looking. Esther was cordial and indifferent. Only Elly seemed agitated—she was looking at her brother as if he had grown up and forgotten her sacrifice too soon.

#### IV

EVERYONE was going home.

"Now don't be in a hurry folks—I'm going to take you all home in the Ford," begged Paul.

"No, I'll walk—it's only to the interurban, you know," Carl said.

"You'll do nothing of the kind," bullied Paul. "No interurban for you tonight—we'll drive you *all* the way. And the Tappans are on the same road. Simple as pie. Now, no arguments." Paul lifted his hand threateningly. Everyone laughed, pretending to yield reluctantly.

"Can't Caroline go along for the ride," asked Elly, thinking jealously of the long ride alone Paul and Esther would have together after the others were safely home.

"Sure," agreed Paul hesitating, "but it'll be pretty crowded I'm afraid. There's Esther and the Tappans, that's

three, and Carl four, and *I've* got to go to drive—well that's five—and the Ford's no Rolls-Royce."

"Oh, no—I don't want to go," said Caroline. "I wouldn't go for the world. Really I'm too tired and there's a lot of work to be done at the office tomorrow—I ought to rest."

No one argued with her.

Mrs. Tappan couldn't find her fur. "What you want to wear it for these fine nights I don't see," fumed Mr. Tappan. Everyone hunted. Elly most of all.

"What's this?" demanded Elly, untangling the rug from the couch corner.

"By George—you didn't see Caroline's fine present! See what little Lizzie drew for herself on her papa's birthday?" commanded Paul, taking the rug from Elly and dangling it carelessly by one corner. Everyone crowded around.

"What a beauty!" admired Esther.

"Why, Caroline, you shouldn't have spent so much. Where'll you be when you are old if you don't save now?" scolded Elly.

"It was real thoughtful of Caroline," soothed old Mr. Davis, "she was thinking of us all when she picked that—something the whole family could get good from."

Well, they were gone.

Elly and old Mr. Davis stood together on the lighted porch waving goodbye to the crowded Ford as it swaggered down the street. Elly clung to her father—her face was pinched and forlorn but the old man's soft white hair stirred serenely in the night air above the still old face. Paul and Esther sat close together on the front seat, Carl and the Tappans—she with her husband's arm around her, crowded behind. As they turned the corner Paul's voice came back to the little group by the steps.

"Come on—folks—let's have a little melody—all together now." And a moment later as the trees hid them, Paul's voice came back beginning,

*There's a long, long trail awinding  
To the land of my dreams—*

Caroline went slowly down the steps.



"Goodbye," she said. "I've had a lovely time."

Now the door was shut. How dark the street was—as if all the lights in the world were out. Caroline walked slowly. Where to go? Why home—where else? Stupid thing—go home.

But when she came to the house where she rented her little room, she couldn't go in, but stood still, listening. Across the street, in the dark under the trees she could hear steps coming, one pair tinkling and light, the other firm and slower, with a clatter at the heel. She could hear voices, whispering, as the footsteps scraped across the porch, her voice laughing and his broken by the rattle of their key. The newly married young couple were back from their honeymoon! Their hall light switched

on as they stood for a moment in the doorway, close together. Then they went in, and the great door shut tightly, firmly, behind them.

The street was dark again.

Caroline strained her eyes upward toward her room. The one open window was black and sightless, like an empty socket of an eye. Back of it yawned the dark pocket of walls and ceiling, dumb bed and chairs.

"Speak to me—somebody speak to me," she whispered—and then, as if she could not bear to stand alone a moment longer, she wavered over to a little tree and put her face against it and leaned against it with all her strength.

"Oh, speak to me—somebody speak to me! Oh, my dear—my dear!" she cried to the little silent tree.



## On Such a Night as This

*By H. R. Taylor*

**I**T is a lyric night. The trees have awakened and the grass has turned from brown to a green day. Birds twitter as a man, intoxicated with spring, strolls down a wooded path. The stars are bright and there is a crescent moon. The air is heavy with the perfume of life renewed.

The man thinks of Romeo and Juliet, and of Lancelot and Guinevere, and of Leander and Hero, and of all the other young lovers since the world began. Anyone, he reflects, could love as they did, with the stimulus of a night like this.

He reaches a lonely road. In the shadows an automobile is parked, and as the man passes he makes out in it the dim figures of a youth and a girl. "Let's do a little petting," the youth is saying without enthusiasm.

"We need a few more drinks first," the girl replies in a tired voice.



**A** BLONDE is never honest with a man. She can't afford to be.



**W**IVES are of three kinds: Lethargic, leery and loony.



# We, The People

By Leonard Hall

—To the end that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.

## I

**J**UNK GALLAGHER was born into Grenk, a big, sweaty hog of a city in the Central West.

His father was a knotty little Irishman who shoveled ore. His mother was a heavy-handed woman whom life had kicked and bloated into a caricature.

Grenk steamed and roared in the summer days and stiffened and roared in the northern winters.

In the north lay a big green lake.

To the east lay a small body of Episcopalians, tailored gentlemen two generations removed from Massachusetts, who caught squat black freighters as they grunted into port and squeezed gold bonds from their dusty bowels.

To the south stretched a row of smoking furnaces—cloud by day and flame by night.

Westward lay 25,000 small houses, each with a baby, a lawn-mower and a phonograph.

In the geographical center of this mess Junk Gallagher was born, and sucked the milk of hardness from the city's sooty breast.

In the dock saloons, stinking of old beer and boiling cabbage, he noted the upturned palm. He winced at the bite of knuckles. He studied the philosophy of accurate kicks, and the ethics of the oiled paddy.

When he could talk, he swore. As soon as he could raise an arm, he

fought. He went, without a pause, from milk to beer. When his legs were flagstone-broken, he ran the can to Grogan's, the dime clinking in the bottom.

The amiable God of the Irish gave him good bone and gristle. Then, chuckling softly in the celestial rectory, he stuck a small but serviceable brain in the ape-like skull, and lighted a hearty laugh in the hog's head chest.

## II

**JUNK** ran the alleys until he was 17. "I want ye off the docks," said his old man then. "Ye'll learn to lay brick!"

At 18 he was placing red bricks in even rows—course after course, course after course. He was a trained baboon.

On Saturday nights he got drunk, and roared across the West Side like a gamboling elephant at the head of his hooligans.

On Sunday mornings he doused his head in cold water, and made his Mass.

He married when he was 23—a healthy Irish girl from his parish. He put her into a house on 65th Street—bought a brass bed and an upright piano on the instalment plan—went his way.

"She's a grand little girl!" he slobbered on Saturday night drunks, as red liquor went down his gullet and his heart filled his chest.

He read the newspaper headlines, for he had crawled through six



grades at the parochial school, the terror of the Sisters.

He ate like a Methodist clergyman. He drank like Gargantua, with prodigious gruntings. He grew red and rough.

He fought, and made his gang fear him. He bought rounds of bad whiskey, and made his comrades love him.

And he laid red brick—course after course, course after course.

### III

AT 25 Junk Gallagher clamped his first headlock on the kingdom.

Junk worked at the polls because his friends did, and because he liked the taste of power. He steered drunks. He scared Democratic bo-hunks. He voted Republican. He wore a badge.

He didn't know much about planks, but he knew the value of a kick and a dollar, and his best friend was Frank Moran, the man who delivered the ward when God was good.

One night, after a state election in which his mob had lost the ward and the town, he rested his chest against a bar, beside a half dozen of the party's terriers.

"It's a great business," said a small man with a hairy face.

"It is," said Junk, grunting.

"Why don't you play it?" pursued the small man.

Junk wrapped his little brain around the thought.

"Them guys in the City Hall will be looking for more trouble next year," went on the voice of the king-maker. "Why don't you run 'em out of the 28th?"

Junk blinked, and shifted his weight.

"I will," he said.

Three days later he lumbered into the dark cubby-hole where the lord god of Grenk did business. In half an hour he came out with a promise.

In another three days the back

rooms knew that a new hierarchy had been born in the ward.

Frank Moran met Junk face to face in Grogan's. His face was as black as a Summer storm.

"What's this I hear about you taking this ward?" asked Moran.

"You heard right," said Gallagher, fixing the late monarch with his pig eyes.

"How do you get that way?"—and Moran bristled.

Junk closed a big fist.

"I'll knock hell out of you!" he replied gently.

There was a new king in the alleys.

### IV

"ALL that big ape can do is lay brick," said the enemy.

"Wait a while," said the friend.

Junk went up and down, learning his trade. He broke a head here and a dollar there. The enemy tried clubs and cash. Rocks jumped out of shadowy street-mouths.

That was nuts to Junk. Lion or lamb, as the moment needed, he took them all on—kissed and killed and made them like it. Bricks by day—half-bricks by night.

Strange ties bound thirty thousand people and gave them into Junk's hands.

He was ignorant—and so he was their brother.

He was strong—and so he was their boss.

He was an Irish Catholic—and so his God was theirs.

He had a moony heart—and so there was always a chance for a dollar.

Strange dumps saw his passing—crumbly back rooms that stank handsomely, Chinese laundries and Polack rectories, factory offices and Yiddish pawnshops.

Everywhere making friends and toadies—

Everywhere learning his oil.

To the east, where marble-crowned hills lifted their heads above



the stench that was Grenk, the Episcopalians went their silvered ways.

They called new rectors from the broad-A belt of New England—well-groomed, gentlemanly fellows, handy with putters, tea-cups and the word of God.

They frowned superbly at the of-fertory. They traded sons and daughters, sometimes with a little boot.

The Union Club drank its Scotch, and looked out of its eight-foot windows at the passing shipping-clerks.

The Chamber of Commerce "sold the town," pointing pridefully at the slag-heaps that buried a hundred thousand immortal souls.

Over in the sink of the city, "under the hill," where the smells settled on summer nights like oceans of un-wholesomeness, Junk Gallagher was making it all safe for the party.

He was also making it all safe for the Episcopalians.

## V

SUMMER sweated on, and Junk approached the end of his novitiate.

The ward recognized a new master. His ham-handed legions crowded over many a stricken field. He sat on the ridge-pole of his world.

November 9. Tin voting booths were hauled to their appointed places, and citizens and others went in to exercise their sacred right of suffrage.

Junk drank a lot of liquor that day. He wore a six-inch badge. He patted many backs. He rode from shack to shack in a shiny black automobile, lent, for the good of the people, by Flannigan, the undertaker.

More than one head was cracked. More than one hunkie ran away. More than one vote was cast by the faithful.

At five o'clock, on the morning of the tenth, Junk sat in the back room of a saloon near the ore docks.

His legs were stretched far out on the smelly sawdust. His collar was

off; his face was puffy; he was dirty.

A little precinct captain with the face of an elderly monkey stumbled into the place.

Junk looked up from the floor. The gorilla leaned on a table.

"Listen, now," said the captain.

The guard of honor came to attention. Glasses splashed into their pools of froth.

"The 28th ward—unofficial," read the ape, from a crumpled piece of paper.

"Grass, Republican—11,432. Fine, Democrat—895."

In the gabble that followed, Gallagher took no part. He stroked his chops with an elephant-hide hand.

"There y'are!" he said, at last. "I missed 900 of them."

## VI

JUNK put the ward into his pocket and took the town.

It was inevitable. He had delivered an undelivered ward to the right people. The law of the pack said that the man who brought in the goods got the gravy. There was no murder, little blood and a very small amount of gassing about it.

Junk Gallagher had licked the world, and he was boss. There was boodle for all.

Adam J. Grass was elected mayor of Grenk. Junk climbed into the saddle and began his ride on the back of a city of 500,000 people and 40 square miles of palaces and pig-styes. And it all went along.

The soggy filling in the civic pie—the motionless, thoughtless mass that knew nothing of machines and mechanics, and cared the same—sprinkled its lawns and cuffed its babies.

The méringue was pleasant to the sight. It welcomed visiting novelists, and showed them the right things—it sat on committees—it made up the country club deficits.

But the grand old brandy in the mince-meat—the workers and fighters



and liars—they were the 10th Legion. They were Junk Gallagher's, and so was Grenk.

## VII

FROM the back room of Moriarity's saloon Junk pulled the ropes and set off the gun-cotton.

The Caseys and Pildowskis ran streets and highways. The Murphys and Catalanos directed public safety. Fifty Burkes sat in the water works and never moved except to scratch, from pay day to pay day.

Junk's father, two years off the ore piles, sat at a pumping station. There, for seven hours a day, he alternately watched a coal pile, and dozed.

The big boss was looking after his own.

Nobody gave a damn.

The Episcopalians sat at their big desks, as wide and smooth as skating rinks, and talked about international policies and national defense.

They built new altars of pink marble, and let Junk alone.

He was a good bet. He gave them two congressmen where one bloomed before.

They talked revision of the Book of Common Prayer, and Junk Gallagher directed the destinies of a half-million Americans.

## VIII

THE mayor sat in the City Hall across the river.

He had a suit of dinner clothes and took all the bows.

Junk could have killed the Hon. Mr. Grass with a wag of the forefinger, and so Mr. Grass was a very nice mayor.

Once in a long while Junk would lumber to the granite palace, and go into the office of the mayor's secretary—a little runt of a man, all oleomargarine.

"I want to see the mayor," he would say.

"His Honor is busy at the moment."

Junk's face would growl and spit.

"Get out of my way, yuh little kike!"

And into the holy of holies he would go, shouldering the oak.

Softly and gently the high-powered machine ran over Grenk. The big hulk hardly knew it. The half-million—readers of the *Nation* and readers of nothing—took its daily bread from the bricklayer who was king, and thanked God, after their quaint custom.

To the viewers with alarm, that is, he was king.

To the alley-scooters—the inky children who fought in his army of the unsoaped—he was the Lord God Jehovah Himself.

## IX

ONE day a railroad system woke up, coveting ten miles of clay cliff.

This cliff divided the dirty city and the clean lake. It was coolness in the summer. It was air when there was no air.

Two hundred gentle souls became battlers for the common weal. They held meetings—passed resolutions—spoke from the rear ends of Fords—made no end of a hullabaloo.

"Save the lake front for the people!" they roared.

"Save the lake front for the people!" echoed 30,000 backyard gardeners, awake to the thuggery on foot.

"We want the lake front," whispered three sleek gentlemen, clinking a sack.

Junk Gallagher sat in the back room of Moriarity's and pawed his face, rough with a red bristle. One hand held a mug.

"Sell it!" said Mr. Gallagher. "We need the money."

In six months four railroad tracks cut the tenements from the surf.

Junk was no longer Junk.

He was Grenk itself.

## X

ONE sizzling July day he steamed into the Steamfitters' Club and



butted his way to the bar through handshakes and back-slaps.

It was "Junk, old kid," and "Meet Mr. Gallagher" all afternoon. Red vitriol bit its way down many a throat, and no chasers asked.

There were damns for this and to hell with that. Loud voices cut through the tobacco smoke, and broke against the ceiling.

Grenk was in his heaven. All was right with his world.

He was with his gang. The city could go to hell. And undoubtedly would.

The Union Club was three blocks away. Its arteries had hardened, and its veins were thin and blue.

The steamfitters had the god of the outfit.

About five o'clock Grenk bought a good-bye round, swore his last, and went to the tall stairway that led to the street a floor below. Teetering, he stood on the top step, and waved a maudlin so-long to the crowd at the bar.

Without added gesture or grimace. Grenk fell down the stairs.

Six steamfitters went down and gathered him up. They carried him into the clubroom, and sat him down on a kitchen chair. His legs sprawled out before him. His head rolled back.

"Pretty damn drunk," said the spokesman, who was not sober. "Leave him be."

Grenk sat on in the smoky room. Pool balls clicked, and glasses clinked, and ripe curses broke on the walls like toy balloons.

His face was red and bloated. A thin line of slobber ran from one corner of his mouth.

(At vespers, in the Lady Chapel of the Cathedral of St. Martin, an underpaid curate in deacon's orders was praying for the President of the United States, the Governor of this State, and all others in authority.)

Grenk didn't move. He was breathing like a donkey-engine.

Visitors looked at him, grinned,

and went on about their business. It was a treat to see a king soused. Like looking in a bedroom window.

The bartender looked over now and then, as he swabbed. The gang went to supper, and the bartender was alone with the bottles and the fly-paper. The after-supper crowd hooted in, and the clatter began again. But it didn't bother Grenk.

Joe Casey came in, and looked at him.

"Drunk again, yuh heller!" said Casey, affectionately. The bartender, out of one corner of his mouth, told him what had happened.

Casey leaned over and put an ear to the drooling mouth.

"He breathes funny. Get a doctor."

The doctor, in due course, came. He said that Grenk's brain was all hashed up, and that he would die in an hour or two.

## XI

GRENK's senseless carcass was hauled to St. Patrick's hospital, and laid on a white bed.

Its breath was coming thick, and its face was an unpleasant purple.

The family was sent for. Mayor Grass sent his secretary to do the decent thing, whatever that might be.

Father Riordan, of St. Malachy's, his dinner napkin stuffed into a trouser's pocket, was an early arrival. He stood at the head of the bed, and began the prayers for the dying.

Grenk's dumpy, over-dressed wife had the place of honor, at the useless head. Three of his sisters—thin and empty females—stood about. All sniffled decently.

Doctor Farrell, head of the house staff, hovered professionally. Two helpless nurses attempted sympathy.

A god was dying. All that was needed was a little patience.

(The night heart of the city began its nervous evening beat. Garden hoses were played over front-porch flower beds, and phonographs started



their everlasting grind in the little houses.)

Father Riordan's prayers droned on—hurrying to precede the slipping soul to the throne of grace.

Outside the window the after-supper life of Gidden Avenue rumbled and growled its unending song. Motors chugged belated householders to waiting wives. Three flies buzzed half-heartedly along the window screen, strangely unmoved.

## XII

SLOWLY the object on the bed looked less a body and more a thing.

Doctor Farrell leaned over. He listened, and heard nothing. Grenk was dead.

The women's wails grew keener.

The voice of sister Mag was audible above the respectful din.

"Glory be to God," it said. "He'll have the biggest funeral this town ever seen!"



## Seven Times the Moon Came

*By Jessie B. Rittenhouse*

SEVEN times the moon came  
When you were far from me,  
Casting on the mountain land  
Its old sorcery.

Seven times the river caught  
Its cold silver fire,  
And the ancient hooded bridge  
Arched above it higher.

All was lovely as before,  
But I could only see  
That seven times the moon had come,  
And you were far from me.



A WOMAN always trusts her intuition—but not when it tells her that the man she loves has ceased to love her.



A MAN has his clothes made to fit his shape; a woman has her shape made to fit her clothes.



WOMEN are faithful to their ideals; men, to their vices. Both live to regret it.



# John Crosby, Old Maid

By Richmond Brooks Barrett

## I

JOHN CROSBY had wanted to take a whole box for the charity concert. He never felt at ease without a barrier between himself and the world at large. The boxes at Freebody Park were as exclusive enclosures as his own pew at Trinity Church; once inside the small sanctuary, he would have been effectually fenced off, by four-foot partitions, from his neighbors. His nieces, however, though they were patronesses of the philanthropic entertainment, had no intention of letting Crosby squander his money on it. The fact that it happened to be his party and that they would attend as his guests did not prevent the Misses Frances and Emmeline from arranging the details to suit themselves.

John Crosby, thirty-five years ago, had been appointed guardian over his dead brother's daughters; but, before the first six months of his trust had been completed, there had been a reversal of rôles. For more than thirty-four years now, his nieces had watched over him vigilantly, treating him for all the world like an unruly adopted child. The timid elderly man was constantly made to consider himself in a state of incipient revolt from the decorous standards of conduct most dear to the heart of a genuine Crosby. He somehow *wasn't* the genuine article; he was weak—the first member of the distinguished family who had ever showed the fatal flaw. It was the task of Frances and Emmeline to keep his vacillating

steps along the straight path of their ancestors.

Crosby was forced to content himself with three box-tickets for the concert. It was part of his nieces' policy to control ruthlessly his expenditures. Though he was a simple little man with most modest tastes and an income he couldn't possibly have spent, he was judged extravagant by Frances and Emmeline.

"We could put our wraps on the empty seats," he had weakly pleaded.

"And pay fifteen dollars for the privilege!" Frances had reminded him.

"But we don't know what kind of people will take those other tickets," he persisted.

"That doesn't matter in the least," Emmeline had countered. "We can get there early and take the front chairs; if the others aren't our sort, we'll merely ignore them."

They arrived at the theatre just as the doors were thrown open. The usher was directed to arrange the three chairs in a close semi-circle at the front of box. Frances and Emmeline, both in black gowns weighted down by cut steel, studied their programs and, leaning forward on either side of their humble preoccupied uncle, exchanged severe comments on the performers across the white dome of his waistcoat.

"Oh my Lord!" Crosby at last broke his anxious silence. "I knew it would be like this."

His companions followed the direction of his transfixed stare. Pre-



ceded by an usher, two women were bearing down on the box.

"Bella Morris!" Frances exclaimed.

"Rita Morris!" came from Emmeline at the same moment.

Evidently each sister had her particular grudge: to Frances, Bella stood for all that was reprehensible, while Emmeline's dearest condemnation was reserved for Rita.

"Bella and Rita Morris!" Crosby groaned. To him, apparently one was as bad as the other.

The Morris women, in their progress along the aisle, had noticed the three pairs of Crosby eyes fastened upon them. Far from being nonplussed, they glanced at each other with obvious amusement. One of them, a tiny wizened creature in a fussy misses' frock, gave a jerky shrug of resignation. Her sister, a flushed specimen of over-indulgence with a small perfectly round red nose, made some remark behind her fan in a wheezy whisper and was rewarded by a giggle.

"Emmeline and Frances and John! How jolly!" The stout Miss Morris, who acted suspiciously as if her legs were piloting themselves without her knowledge, who indeed gave every evidence of being in a befuddled state, plunged with precipitation into the box. Recovering her precarious equilibrium, "Look out—there's a step down, Bella," she warned her sister.

"Rita." Frances Crosby indicated that she recognized the newcomer but carefully refrained from voicing an actual greeting.

Bella Morris, hopping like a decrepit bird into the box, received a grudging "Bella" from Emmeline Crosby.

"Rita dear," she announced, "you're standing right in front of poor John Crosby, and he wants to get up and shake hands nicely."

It was true that the confused Crosby, having turned his chair half-around, was making tentative efforts to rise; but Rita Morris kept him

imprisoned. The swelling rondure of her left hip impended above him; patiently he was dodging it and seeking an opportunity to scramble out of his seat.

Bella gave Rita a push.

Crosby, enabled by this move to get on his feet at last, rewarded his rescuer with a courteous handshake and a formal greeting in a frightened falsetto. "How d'y do, Miss Bella? Happy—very happy indeed."

"I'm so glad *somebody's* happy!" Bella returned, with a quizzical glance at the forbidding backs of Frances and Emmeline.

Rita had by now thrown herself into a wicker chair that creaked protestingly under the burden. As with most fat women, her method of sitting down was just to lose her balance and plunge backward.

"How d'y do, Miss Rita?" Crosby ventured, proffering his limp little hand.

She gave his fingers an affectionate squeeze.

"I'm in agony, John—perfect agony." She favored him with a literal answer. "Gout, you know—it's the damndest disease. I always thought gout was funny—till I got it." Genially she tapped the rigid Emmeline's arm with the handle of her fan. "Ever had gout, my dear?"

Emmeline's only response was a single sharp headshake.

"I suppose, if you do have it, you'll call it rheumatism. Yes, you'll call it rheumatism," Rita reflected aloud, in a tone of judicial gravity.

"Gout is a most trying complaint," Crosby acknowledged sympathetically.

"Have *you* had it, John?" Rita was still in pursuit of a fellow-sufferer.

"Oh, no!" he protested with vehemence.

"Well, it's no disgrace!" she bluffly caught him up. "I don't see why you Crosbys should *resent* my question."

"I beg your pardon—I didn't mean—" he faltered.

"Of course he didn't." Bella



squinted indulgently at him. "He'd never mean anything that wasn't sweet and gentlemanly, Rita."

While she spoke, Bella had quietly pulled Crosby's chair over toward her.

"Do sit down, John!" she now commanded. "There may be unkind talk if you're seen standing up like that and philandering with those Morrisses."

Crosby, suddenly aware of his conspicuous position, ducked down at once into his chair with as sheepish confusion as if he had been caught publicly exposing himself in a bathtub. Then, to his still greater chagrin, he realized that he was sitting now between Bella and Rita, with his left shoulder presented to his own nieces. He had been forced, without his knowledge, into the position of deserter from the Crosby ranks.

In a desperate endeavor to re-establish the family communication, he turned half-around in his chair and quavered into Emmeline's ear,

"The performance seems late in starting, my dear."

Emmeline said nothing; she let the back of her head, stiff on its neck, speak for her.

"It's time the lights went down, certainly." Frances, motionless like her sister, seemed to be addressing the stage. The quality of innuendo in her utterance, however, was not lost on poor John Crosby.

## II

HENCEFORTH, the Crosby sisters ignored the sordid little drama that was being enacted behind them. The fact that their uncle had been delivered unawares into the hands of the enemy did not matter. He *could* have escaped: in short, he could have slipped his chair back to its original decorous position between Frances and Emmeline. Whether his failure was the result of deliberate refractoriness or miserable cowardice made

no difference; on either score, his conduct was reprehensible. So the Misses Crosby presented their backs, twinkling with jet, to the spectacle of the Morris wiles and of John Crosby's childish attempts at an answering roguishness.

Bella and Rita had just been drinking—it would not have taken the most impartial observer long to find that out. The women themselves would have been the last to deny the accusation. They'd *always* just been drinking. Their tipping tendencies had been town-property for thirty years. Their technical classification as spinsters had been the result of their apprenticeship to conviviality at too tender years.

The Morrisses were a fine old family, though impoverished; the two girls had been dedicated at birth to the pursuit of "big matches." They had developed from charming children into beautiful women; unfortunately, they had from their early teens given the potential "big matches" such immediate and generous companionship that they became an integral part of the wild-oats period. It was always left to someone else to pull the youthful scions together again. Bella and Rita harbored no grudges against the men who shied off from marrying them; they themselves had no desire to marry. All they wanted was their freedom and their good time. They had lived full, riotous lives and middle-age found them without plaintive regrets.

It was a question whether John Crosby and his admirable nieces could have made with honesty the same claim for themselves. Emmeline and Frances had been from their girlhood years irrevocably set in the virginal mould. So, for that matter, had John; being a man, however, he had been favored with the label of "bachelor," a word much looser, much more equivocal than "old maid." There had been times when John had achieved a gratuitous thrill



from the thought that the world at large always associated waggish and illicit activities with every man who was single. He had at least that precious advantage over the Misses Frances and Emmeline. Nobody had ever suspected them of lapses from virtue. Still, actually to have run counter to destiny might have done much for them all. Had Frances and Emmeline married, had John married or strayed, they perhaps would have showed more of the lively, full-blown contentment that the Morris sisters exhibited.

It had soon become manifest to John this evening that his cherished name of bachelor couldn't fool Bella and Rita into believing him formidable. By their jocose treatment of him, they shamelessly consigned him to the limbo of old maids. They had had too much experience with bachelors to mistake his particular status. They intimidated him, they wounded his pride; and, with lamentable injustice, he had soon begun to feel a decided vindictiveness toward his nieces. Hadn't *they* kept him down, hadn't *they* caused his degeneration into a mere butt for the ridicule of women like the Morrisses?

It was too late now ever to recoup his losses. Crosby, in spite of his imaginative vision of what might have been, couldn't conjure up even the haziest image of anything that might still be. Tonight he had a bitter sense of life-long failure and defeat. Going about placidly on his pottering way, he had been content with his goodness and at the same time pleasurably aware that others might be questioning it. Then, in a moment, the sly eyes of the Morris sister had found him out; he saw them, in their humorous scorn, as public opinion in general. He was, to the whole world, John Crosby—old maid.

Meanwhile, the heat of the theatre acted on the Morrisses, stirring them up, in their saturated state, to a lively fermentation. They paid no heed to

the stage; it was possible that they couldn't see that far. In their heady gaiety, they leaned across Crosby's legs as if he had been a mere table set up between them; indeed, had they rested their elbows on his knees; it would not have surprised the fussily uncomfortable old man. He wanted to assert himself, to prove to his nieces that he wasn't being neglected; moreover, people in the neighboring boxes were glancing in the direction of the Morris sisters and Crosby sought frantically for ways and means to make the group appear a jolly threesome.

At last inspiration had come to him. Very pink and shy, he had yet bravely piped up, "See here, Miss Bella and Miss Rita. What do you say we go outdoors and—" here he gave a short gasp—"and have a little smoke?"

"Do you *smoke*?" Bella wonderingly asked.

"Like a chimney, Miss Rita," he lied. As a matter of fact, his daily rations consisted of one cigarette after dinner.

In a state of mind somewhere between triumph and abject panic, he escorted the unsteady women out of the theatre. On the veranda, with no witnesses about, he let his timidity have full sway again. Toddling back and forth at his companions' heels, he said never a word; and they, for their part, had straightway forgotten him.

"I want another cigarette," Bella had at last announced. "Where's John Crosby? Oh—thanks."

Cigarette-case in hand, he had obsequiously tiptoed around from behind her.

While, with awkward gallantry, he held up the lighted match for her, she remarked to Rita between puffs.

"Do you know what I think about John Crosby, my dear? I think he wants to be a devil."

"Oh, Miss Bella!" He grew pinker and uneasily shuffled his small feet.



Rita examined him with a great air of objective appraisal.

Then, nodding, "I believe you're right!" she decided.

Bella turned her quizzical gaze on Crosby.

"I'll see what I can do for him," she reflected. "I'll give him a trial, anyhow—tuition reasonable and his money back if he's not satisfied."

The two women burst out laughing.

Crosby felt suddenly shaky; somehow, the impersonality of the discussion had given him a sense of trapped helplessness. Like a little boy, he was about to be put to school, willy-nilly, for his own improvement. He dropped back, speechless, and the incorrigible Morris pursued their lurching stroll.

Later, however, in the motor with Frances and Emmeline, John Crosby had an air of jaunty defiance. His nieces pointedly refrained from including him in their talk. Bella and Rita, though, figured largely.

John, after a period of beaming reflection, all at once announced, "Well, my dears, you've only yourselves to thank. You wouldn't let me buy a whole box, you know."

His nieces ignored the challenge; but that it was a challenge they could not have denied.

## II

FRANCES and Emmeline, some weeks later, were forced to relinquish altogether their elderly charge, to resign with dour dignity in favor of Bella Morris. The Sunday School picnic had precipitated the crisis.

Crosby, ever since the night of the charity concert, had been Bella's flaccid prey. Fastening her small talons in his plump flesh, as it were, she had flown with him from one end of Newport to another. Hopping unannounced into his house of an afternoon, she would airily command, "Take me for a nice long drive, John." With her most winning

squint, she invited herself to dine with him: "Be sure you have some of that ancestral port opened for me; and, by the way, I see woodcock's in season!" She was poor as a church-mouse, she often reminded him; so why under the heavens shouldn't she procure for herself a place at the rich man's table and in his motor?

"Besides, my dear John, you interest me as a study—and, of course, I intend to pay you back for your generosity. In other words, I'm going to make you a reputation out of whole cloth. It's the first charitable act I ever performed."

At first, she merely scared him; but before long she had begun to entertain him also. With her unflinching nervous energy, with her sense of the ridiculousness of herself and of him, she became to his eyes a sort of vaudeville show in a half-dozen acts that went on and on in front of him without disturbing his somnolent passivity. Bella, for all her eccentric queerness, had the art of lulling his terrors to sleep. After his initial panic had been charmed away, he would sit quietly beside her and take part in her chatter only by a fixed receptive smile; like a Cheshire cat, he would soon appear to have vanished entirely from the earthly scene except for his mild grin.

The Crosby sisters had for a time handled the equivocal situation rather cleverly. Frances, at length summing matters up, had announced, "We realize, Uncle John, that you are a very weak and foolish old man; but we don't for an instant credit you with being wicked."

Thus she put him into his proper place; her shrewdness had saddened him, given him again the feeling of fatuous futility in all his struggles against his old-maid doom. For the past month he had had the vague hope that Bella's aggressions might be redounding to his own credit. But here he still was—just where he'd always been—a poor pathetic celibate.



Bella, noticing his depression, had wheedled out of him the cause of it.

"Now cheer up, John—just cheer up!" she bluffly challenged him. "I'll find the way yet to make them all sit up and take notice of you."

And she did find it at the picnic a week later. John, as Superintendent of the Sunday School, had the privilege of taking a guest on the excursion; but Bella's proposal that he take her had made his heart skip a beat.

"A day at Rocky Point?" Her eyes snapped mischievously. "Oh, I've got to go. If you only knew the unlimited possibilities of Rocky Point, John!"

"Oh, but Miss Bella!" he had weakly protested. "We'd all bore you—"

"Well, you're enough of a bore all by yourself, John; and I want to get this job finished as soon as I can," she had retorted. "I see manifold opportunities in your picnic. If you won't invite me, I'll ship as a stow-away."

"I *do* invite you, Miss Bella. I'll be honored—" this with an old-fashioned dancing-school bow—"much honored."

The picnic had proved an agonizing ordeal for John Crosby. The scholars, ranging in years from five to fifteen and in character from incipient missionaries to fledgling street-walkers, all surrendered at once to the gaiety of the wizened Miss Morris. With the arrant fickleness of childhood, they turned their backs on their spiritual pastors and masters and clustered in an adoring circle around Bella. Even before the excursion-boat had reached the amusement-park, John's questionable guest had filled her day with engagements for the merry-go-round, roller-coaster and chute-the-chutes. The Sabbath School teachers, headed by Frances and Emmeline, sat rigidly with their backs to the wall and in their hearts the bitter knowledge of human frailty rankled. Between the

opposing parties Crosby feebly teetered. He was snubbed by his parish colleagues and utterly ignored by the children.

At three o'clock, luncheon was served in the woods a mile beyond the gates of the amusement-park. The teachers had made sparse provision for their own classes. The peremptory demands of the stomach had at last effected a cleavage between Bella and her fluttering flock. Groups were scattered about beneath the trees, each company commanded by its Sunday instructor; and all the children, casting greedy glances abroad, were convinced that their own classes were receiving the stingiest fare. "Miss Marvin's girls have got water-melon!" complained the ungrateful crew gathered around Miss Sempill. "Miss Sempill's brought cream-puffs!" ran the rumor in the Marvin camp.

John Crosby and Bella Morris hovered on the outskirts. The preceptors were perfunctorily luke-warm in their invitations to partake of the feast. Not so the children!

"Oh, Miss Morris—won't you have my piece of pie?" pleaded one of the embryo courtesans.

"Miss Morris—take my éclair!" piped a ten-year-old girl who, till that day, had had no interest apart from her spiritual advancement.

"Get me out of this, John," Bella had finally commanded. "I've made the day for you all. I deserve a cigarette now."

"Of course, of course," Crosby admitted. "But where can we go, Miss Bella?"

"Good Lord! What are these woods meant for, I'd like to know?" she asked with obvious impatience. "Come on!" Seizing his arm, she piloted him away from the clearing.

"But the ice-cream!" He was plaintive. "I always provide the ice-cream. I always give it out myself, Miss Bella."

"Damn the ice-cream!" she silenced him.



For an hour she dragged him about through brambly thickets. It had seemed to him at first that she chose their course recklessly at random. Every time she paused to light a cigarette, he would mop his wet forehead and venture on a note of wavering anxiety, "Don't you think, Miss Bella, that we'd better be turning back?"

"Presently, John, presently!" she would return.

"You're sure of our direction?" he asked over and over.

"Quite sure—you can rely on me," she would inform him.

At last, as they emerged from a dense pine-gloom into the thinner sun-streaked shade of a birch-grove, she had announced, "It is warm. Sit there, John."

She pointed peremptorily to a fallen tree-trunk at the side of a brook. Stifling a sigh, he sank down.

"Now then, do you know what?" she challenged him, standing before him and nodding her head at him sagely, quizzically.

His only response was a long glance of helpless imploration. Her air had given him a chill premonition of some wickedly planned disaster.

"I'll tell you what, John," she pursued. "You're nicely and thoroughly lost. They'll never find us in a hundred years."

He scrambled to his feet, the muscles of his plump face suddenly relaxed and sagging, his tremulous mouth hanging half-open.

"What have you done, Miss Bella?" he gasped. "Oh, for mercy's sake, what have you done?"

"Why, I've made your reputation, of course," she reminded him. "To all intents and purposes you're a devil, John."

He began a distracted pacing of the small covert; on the tips of his toes he minced back and forth at the mechanical gait of a wound-up toy mandarin.

"Oh!" he went on moaning, his hands to his head. "Oh, for mercy's sake!"

\* \* \*

An hour later they stood on the brink of a cliff, with the ocean directly beneath them.

"There goes the picnic!" Bella waved a casual hand; far away in the clear twilight the little Sunday School steamboat was toiling over the water toward the horizon-line; it seemed to waddle and pant rheumatically, like an over-fat poodle.

"They've given you up for lost!" Bella commented.

"Lost!" came the hollow echo from Crosby.

"There's a dear old farm-house about a quarter of a mile away," she pursued amicably. "We can put up there for the night. It's comfortable." She administered a mollifying pat to his coat-sleeve. "I'm not lost, you know. I'm acquainted with every inch of the ground. I haven't been here for fifteen years—think of it, fifteen years!—but I'll never forget that farm-house, John."

She wagged her head as at some ribald memory.

"I wired the other day for accommodations—the same old accommodations." She addressed him with as great casualness as if her topic were plain commonplace small-talk. "They answered that they'd be charmed to serve us. You can have the sitting-room tonight; I'll take the bedroom, John."

Turning her back on the microscopic steamboat, she started off at a brisk walk; in mute despair, Crosby padded after her.

#### IV

THE next day Crosby returned to his home a broken man. In the interval between his arrival at the farmhouse and the moment when the ferry nosed its way into New-



port harbor, he had not spoken a dozen words. At the sight of Trinity Church spire, however, he crept closer to Bella and made a weak clutch for her arm.

"You're all that's left to me—all," he half-whimpered. "You'll never throw me off, Miss Bella?"

She looked at him with a frank pity now.

"Upon my word, John," she said, "I believe I've taken you too far. But don't worry, I'll see you through."

"Miss Bella!" he began, and broke off. "Miss Bella! Would you do me the honor—?"

"Well—what honor?" she asked with some abruptness as he floundered.

"To become my wife?" He managed to get the offer out before his breath left him altogether.

"Oh, John Crosby! *That's cowardice, sheer cowardice!*" She was stern. "I took you on this picnic to make a celebrity of you, not a joke. The man that married me would be laughed out of town. Of course I won't marry you."

"I'm sorry, Miss Bella. I'm just a lonely old man now," he quavered. "You'd brighten my last days."

"I can still do that, you know," she returned. "And people will begin to respect you now, John, you'll see. That's one thing about me—people do admire the men who've gone to that farmhouse with me. It's always given them a certain prestige."

"But I've found, Miss Bella, that I'm too old, that I'm too done up to care." He allowed himself a full humiliating confession at present. "I'm afraid it's killed me, going against my destiny this way."

"Nonsense!" she scoffed; but, slipping her arm through his and patting his shoulder indulgently, she somehow seemed to give the statement a certain pitying attention.

"All you need is a good night's rest," she at length decided. "When

you wake up tomorrow, you'll love the notoriety. There aren't many men that can set a whole town by the ears at your age."

## V

CROSBY had been right; Bella Morris, in winning for him the prestige of an autumnal efflorescence, had unfortunately killed him into the bargain.

"The poor dear old man died happy, anyhow," Bella was wont to console herself. "He could never have gone out and faced people; but, tucked safely in his little bed, he did have his fun when the people came to him."

On the very day of his return to Newport, his heart had begun to fail. The heroism of actual suffering was not for such a man as John Crosby; characteristically, his pale small flame of life had just grown weaker, by imperceptible degrees, till at last it guttered out. From the utter peace and security of his death-bed, he could jauntily brave his sorrowing friends, could savor in epicurean tranquillity his late-worn reputation as a philandering bachelor. Nothing could have been more exquisitely comforting than his present physical ease, the protection so dear to his recluse's heart of the venerable four-poster, blended with a delicious sense of acknowledged moral obliquity. He could lie there, full of a sighing content, and read in the faces of his relatives and life-long associates the conviction of eternal separation. He was blissfully damned. As the days passed, he had himself forgotten that his sin was a fiction; he grew to have an implicit faith in his wickedness. When he lapsed into occasional painless fatuous delirium, he was always roaming at Bella's side and his babble was of a vaguely incriminating order. Perdition had become sweet, to a large extent, because he would share it with Bella.



Bella had at once taken charge of the sick-chamber; Crosby sternly refused requests for interviews that would exclude her. Only the lawyer was granted permission to see the dying man alone. All other callers, even Frances and Emmeline and the rector of Trinity Church, were forced to accept the presence of the painted and quizzically muzzy old Bella Morris. Hopping about the bed, she treated the imminent mystery of death as no better than a ribald farce; indeed, she managed to make of Crosby's last days a crying scandal.

That she was kind, kinder to him than anyone else had ever been, nobody noticed but Crosby himself. In that final month of his futile career, the timid old man had his precious long-deferred romance. He fell gently but none the less glowingly in love with his wizened protector. He lived at last.

On the day he died, he submitted with a cryptic smile to the prayers for the sick; then he had ordered everyone but Bella out of the room. Perched on a chair at his side, she leaned over the bed and joked gaily, gallantly into his ear.

The end had come while he was indulging in the faint ghost of a chuckle.

## VI

At the reading of the will, Bella sat apart from the crêpe-laden mourners. She wore a misses' afternoon-frock of baby-blue and a little fancy blue hat that should have been on the head of a ten-year-old girl. At the staggering tidings that she was bequeathed an income of fifteen thousand dollars a year, she merely squinted and made a wry amused face. Bella, as in all her other entanglements, had taken on Crosby haphazard, without thought of future aggrandizement. The news of his generosity tickled her sense of humor; otherwise, she was not impressed. She never *had* cared a damn about money.

"Poor John Crosby!" The mention of her dead benefactor always elicits from Bella a shrill exclamation of regret. "He had a late start, but once he *did* start—good Lord!"

She completes her commentary by an eloquent wag of the head and a low whistle. The act represents, on her part, an affectionate tribute, a truly unselfish obituary. Truly unselfish—for Bella loves to share a joke. So subtle is she, indeed, in her veiled suggestions that even Rita Morris half-believes John Crosby died a seasoned old dog.



## Love Me Tomorrow

*By Mary Carolyn Davies*

LOVE me tomorrow.  
 Today I do not care;  
 I have not tasted sorrow;  
 I still am fair.

That love you hold today  
 Why need I borrow?  
 See! I am rich, and gay!  
 Love me tomorrow.



# The Guest at Kerr Manor

By John Mosher

## I

THE little gambling upheaval on board the *Cyclopic* first brought Timothy Seaquat to Mrs. Crosby-Kerr's attention. She had heard of him as had everyone else on the steamer, but when first she saw him, he was leaning over the rail of the promenade deck, staring at a quartz-colored sea.

"That boy lost every cent he had to those thieves," said Mrs. Crosby-Kerr's chair neighbor.

"So that's the one," answered Mrs. Crosby-Kerr.

It had all happened according to the classic schedule of an Atlantic crossing. The steamer wasn't out of Cherbourg before the playing started, of course, in the smoking-room, and mid-ocean was not passed before two rough-looking customers, bad characters at a glance, who had been hauling in the money, had answered a challenge to their probity by throwing down their cards and refunding. They had ventured their wits against a woman's, a buyer in the clothing business, whose eyes, sharpened for the frailties of man by those of serges and chiffons, had immediately detected their underground work. It was rumored that the police had been radio-ed, and that on their arrival in New York, the sharpers would be arrested.

The incident highly regaled the steamer-chair brigade. They had opinions of people who played for money with total strangers—with warnings against professional gamblers posted in every corridor. One

young man had lost every cent; he didn't even have anything with which to telegraph. That was the poignant item. The wisdom of a collection had been debated.

Mrs. Crosby-Kerr, on her part, had had no patience with such sentimentalism. It was a mistake to give such people money. They only lost it again. This man must be a fool to get into such a predicament. If not worse! Certainly a very weak character. It was said his sort existed, but the sensible could do nothing better than to keep away from them.

She appraised him now severely. He looked just as she had expected, at least from the side view she had at the moment. A tan ulster draped his thin body with the familiarity of long usage; his pea-green trousers fluttered like fledgling pennants about his fox-terrier calves; and the whole loose structure seemed pegged down to earth by the gigantic English cap.

Fox-terrier! Mrs. Crosby-Kerr knew the species. They sometimes came to her manor in Rhinebeck to sell things, sets of De Maupassant or stock in dubious bonanzas. She noticed that he wore white knit gloves. It impressed her as an affectation, in keeping with his general suggestion of instability. She wondered if he showed the traces of dissipation. She had been a little decisive, a bit hard, on the matter of the collection, and she wanted to be justified. She wished he would turn around, and let her see for herself just how dissipated he did look.

At that moment he did so, and as though guessing that the two women,



bundled in their rugs, were discussing him, he unexpectedly smiled and nodded, touching his cap.

"He's a mere child," exclaimed Mrs. Crosby-Kerr.

"So dissipated looking," said her companion. "Such a weak face!"

"A mere child," repeated Mrs. Crosby-Kerr.

"An adventurer," declared the other. "They always look younger than they are. They have no responsibilities."

"He smiled at us very politely," Mrs. Crosby-Kerr put forward by way of argument.

"He smiled at you, Mrs. Crosby-Kerr. Not at me. I got the impression definitely that he smiled at you only."

"I am sure," said Mrs. Crosby-Kerr, "that he smiled at us both."

Mrs. Crosby-Kerr remembered now that she didn't know this person in the next chair. Had never seen the woman before they met on the steamer. She didn't believe in talking to strangers on board ship. Perhaps she had better have her chair moved. When she came up later for the sunset she looked about for the deck-steward with this idea in mind. But he was nowhere in sight, and instead she ran upon Timothy strolling about the deck as though he hadn't a trouble in the world.

"Have you seen the deck-steward?"

She had no reason to ignore the boy.

"He's moving that lady's steamer-chair, the one next to you—'round to the other side."

"Oh," said Mrs. Crosby-Kerr, "then I don't want him."

Timothy was looking at the sunset. "Isn't the sunset pretty?" he remarked.

She observed that it was a very pretty sunset.

"Do you mind if I smoke?" He drew cigarettes from his pocket, but waited for her answer.

Not at all! She didn't mind. But

she hoped he didn't smoke too much. Some young men did.

"It doesn't matter whether I smoke or don't smoke," Timothy announced.

Mrs. Crosby-Kerr didn't understand what he meant.

"Why not?" she inquired.

"I've only three years to live anyway. Perhaps only a year. I'll be pretty lucky if I live more than a year."

Mrs. Crosby-Kerr was shocked.

"My dear child, what do you mean?"

"Oh, I've lots of things the matter with me," he said chattily. "Heart and lungs! Shot to pieces! Inherited!"

His eyes were fixed on the sunset, appreciating the brilliant colors. Life might be short; meanwhile there was this. Mrs. Crosby-Kerr understood.

"You ought to stay home," she cried, "and take care of yourself."

"Home!" he exclaimed. But at that moment the ball of the sun touched the sea, and he cried eagerly as though he were pulling the strings and it were all a triumph of his own. "There she goes. Right into the water! Splash!"

Then he turned to Mrs. Crosby-Kerr. "Home? Home! Oh, I haven't any home!"

So he was an orphan. That explained a great deal, thought Mrs. Crosby-Kerr, not troubling to analyze exactly what it did explain.

"But you must have some place—?" she began.

He shook his head, and then laughed.

"Funny, isn't it, running into New York without a penny? Stimulating!"

"It must be," she said gravely.

"Yes, it is," he assured her, "and I feel fine after this trip too. I just said to myself over in Europe that I wasn't going to take any old raft when I came home. I was coming home first class, I said to myself. I had the money. Oh, I made lots of



money over in Europe. I was working. I'm going to work again in America. Got a job. Private secretary to the president of one of the biggest corporations in the country. I met him in Berlin, helped him out, and he gave me this position. That's why I'm coming home. America's fine if you've something to do. If you haven't, Europe's better. Gives you more scope."

Mrs. Crosby-Kerr felt very much relieved.

"I am glad you have such a fine opportunity," she said, "and I only hope you won't overwork."

He agreed with her that that was important.

"But I have a month to get rested in," he went on.

"A month?"

"Yes. Job doesn't begin for a month."

Then they were interrupted.

"Oh, Mr. Seaquat—Mr. Se-e-a-quat." A girl with a pert, up-turned nose raced up to them. "Oh, Mr. Seaquat, we've been looking for you everywhere!"

Timothy had to go. These women, they have to be humored! He threw back over his shoulder a farewell smile, one of those you-understand smiles.

After this little conversation they had had numerous others. He asked her if he couldn't have his chair moved into the vacant space next to hers. He implied that the younger people on board made him tired. They wouldn't let him alone. He knew such surprising things about the people on the steamer.

"See that old lady," he said, "well, last night she thought the boat was going to sink, and she tied all the steamer chairs together to make a raft."

"No!"

"Honest she did. She lives all alone in a great big house somewhere, and it's gone to her head." He shook his own sagely. "That's not good for old people, living alone. When

I'm old I'm going to have young people around the house all the time."

Mrs. Crosby-Kerr sighed. Kerr Manor was enormous.

"You see you have your daughter—"

She had mentioned Gertrude to him.

"My daughter is married," she said. "She is not very strong—"

Timothy was terribly concerned. She felt obliged to relieve him at once.

"To tell the truth," she said, "I think she rather likes being an invalid. Her husband isn't so strong either. Of course they are both older than you." She hesitated a moment, and then she added, "But I had a boy once. He died."

"I wish I had known him," Timothy answered.

She invited him to spend a few days at Kerr Manor (till he "got his bearings"), the evening before they docked.

He accepted.

In the strenuous business of landing, of course, he helped a great deal. He was very funny about it too. He seemed to be convinced she was up to all the tricks of the smuggler, false trays in her trunks, false linings in her coats. No one had ever accused her of such a thing before, and she laughed a great deal at the absurdity of the notion. Then she saw her son-in-law, Luther, at the other end of the gangplank, and that sobered her.

"We are so glad you have come safely back to us, Mother Crosby-Kerr."

How that annoyed her! Mother Crosby-Kerr. Like a mother superior!

"Where is Gertrude?"

"Gertrude could not come to the boat. We hope it is nothing. I personally do not believe it can be diabetes. She will tell you herself."

"I knew you'd all have something wrong with you by the time I got back."



Luther looked pained, but patient. He was thinking: "Poor woman, she can't have many more years." She knew he was. It was written clear as daylight in his smile.

"Yes, that's all I brought," she told the customs man, "I don't bring presents. My relatives buy their hot-water bags in this country."

"The same dear old lady," Luther murmured.

"Luther," announced Mrs. Crosby-Kerr, "I am not going to your house. I am going straight to Rhinebeck. And Luther, I want you to meet Mr. Seaquat. Mr. Seaquat, my son-in-law, Mr. Woolley. Mr. Seaquat is going with me to Rhinebeck. You can come up when you want to."

She turned briskly away, following the truck of her possessions. Luther steadied himself, uncertain whether to telephone Gertrude to meet them at the Grand Central to deal with this situation. Before he could decide, this preposterous looking young man had clutched his arm.

"Did she get it through?" the young man was whispering.

"What?" gasped Luther.

Timothy wagged his head knowingly, eloquently.

"Liquor?" murmured Luther.

Timothy nodded, and looked warily at the guards about them. They weren't out yet. They must be careful.

Luther was very angry. Mrs. Crosby-Kerr exposed the family to the most grotesque sort of scandal. Of course she didn't realize how serious such an offence was at this time. Something must be done to control the old lady. He was trying to think what, when she and this Mr. Seaquat burst into laughter. It was all a joke.

"Very funny," Luther said. "Very funny indeed. I am sure Mr. Seaquat must have a reputation for humor among his friends."

Timothy missed this flick of sarcasm as he was waving farewell to

the snub-nosed little thing at the moment. She was holding a handkerchief to the corner of her eye.

## II

KERR MANOR stood royal, yet stolid, in its park. Its greenhouses glittered in the sunlight, and in the shadows of its great trees imported sheep were grazing much like the domestic breeds. The long drive wound through shrubbery ticked with Latin names, past a pool where the swans flaunted, up to the solemn red brick and brownstone portecochère, enshrining at the moment a butler.

"How do you do, Lowell," said Mrs. Crosby-Kerr. "It's very nice to be home again. Mr. Seaquat will have President Polk's room."

As soon as Timothy was ready, there would be tea in the library. Lowell lead him up the broad stairway. At its head was a life-size portrait, done in the manner of the best-known English school, of a handsome young man in riding breeches with a crop in one hand and the other resting on the head of a Russian greyhound. A number of persons not interested in art in the least would enjoy the picture, and quite understand why it should have electric lights arranged above it, and going day and night.

Mrs. Crosby-Kerr herself was detained downstairs by the telephone. It was Gertrude in New York. She had called up to tell her mother how much hurt she was.

"Frankly I was very much hurt," she said. "I can't understand your not even coming to see me. I am only glad that Luther says you look so well."

"I was never better in my life," said Mrs. Crosby-Kerr.

"And we are coming up tomorrow," announced Gertrude.

Mrs. Crosby-Kerr protested. In Gertrude's delicate condition was that wise? Gertrude considered it



wise. She and Luther would take the early train. Luther approved.

"My daughter and Mr. Woolley are coming tomorrow," Mrs. Crosby-Kerr informed Timothy when he sauntered into the library at last.

"A regular party," said Timothy.

Mrs. Crosby-Kerr didn't consider the epithet very apt. She sighed: "They are both invalids: they always have been, and always will be."

"I guess they are running up to look me over," said Timothy, reaching into the sugar bowl with his fingers.

The maid brought in Mrs. Crosby-Kerr's favorite cakes.

"How do you do, Cabot? It's very nice to be home again."

"Did you see that?" Mrs. Crosby-Kerr exclaimed as soon as the girl was out of the room. "That girl has bobbed her hair. Cabot has bobbed her hair. They tell me she spends every night at the moving pictures. But she's very neat and industrious."

Timothy assured her one often saw very nice, respectable looking girls at the moving pictures. He put down his tea-cup then and wandered about the room with its portraits of the Crosbys and the Kerrs and the Crosby-Kerrs, these not illuminated as the portrait on the stairs, but on inspection it was not to be regretted. When he came to the piano he offered to sing for Mrs. Crosby-Kerr. "The Maiden's Prayer." Only it was not the maiden Mrs. Crosby-Kerr remembered. The tune had its vivacious charm, however, though the maiden besought something to the effect: "—let me keep my girlish laughter. Let me have the boy I'm after."

Mrs. Crosby-Kerr laughed, but thought it as well that Cabot was not in the room. The song ended none too soon for at the moment the girl entered to announce:

"Mrs. Vanderfahren, Miss Vanderfahren."

"My dear Emma—and Virginia."

Mrs. Crosby-Kerr was delighted.

The ladies had just happened to wander by to look at the swans, and had heard that Mrs. Crosby-Kerr was back. They had thought she would stay in town with the Woolleys.

"They come up tomorrow. Oh, Mr. Seaquat—"

Mrs. Vanderfahren was supposed to resemble the Dutch queen, though some vulgar people who could never have traveled and seen one thought a Dutch windmill more to the point. Miss Vanderfahren, tall and blonde, was addicted to drooping plumage on her hats which made her liable to arrest in this country.

"We heard music," said Mrs. Vanderfahren, being pleasant about it.

"Oh, I was singing 'The Maiden's Prayer' for Mrs. Crosby-Kerr."

"Won't you sing again?" said Miss Vanderfahren.

Timothy instantly perched at the piano, but to Mrs. Crosby-Kerr's relief, struck a few new chords, and then airily embarked on a trifle, still, to be sure, a bit cynical in tone, about "I'll be practically true to you, most of the time." His voice dangled and pirouetted about the fringe of the tune, and when he finished, Miss Vanderfahren asked if he had ever sung in concert.

"No," said Timothy. "Not in concert. Nor in opera. Though I've been connected with opera, in a business way. Sort of impresario. Importing prima donnas. We'd hear of some singer making a hit in Vienna or Milan, and over I'd run, and call on the lady. Used to carry a pocketful of rings, diamonds, all kinds. Sapphires surrounded with diamonds. They like those. Big sapphires with diamonds all around. Put 'em in a good humor, and they'd sign up for anything."

"Interesting!" said Miss Vanderfahren.

"Very," said Mrs. Vanderfahren, seeing that she must make a few inquiries of Mrs. Crosby-Kerr. At the end of which she declared herself glad that Luther and Gertrude arrived



next day on the scene. "—come, Virginia."

She hoped that Mr. Seaquat appreciated the splendid friend he had found in Mrs. Crosby-Kerr.

"Don't I though! Just!" he cried heartily.

"I don't like that young man Alice has brought into her house at all," said Mrs. Vanderfahren outside. "She doesn't know a thing about him. Luther and Gertrude will settle him, I suppose. I really worry a great deal about Alice."

"Really?" said Mrs. Vanderfahren.

The portrait on the stairs, Mrs. Crosby-Kerr explained to Timothy, was her son.

"That is Cedric."

"I knew it was," Timothy replied. "I knew it was the minute I saw it. He's such a fine-looking young man." He lowered his voice reverently. "Was he killed in the war?"

Mrs. Crosby-Kerr shook her head.

"Tomorrow," she replied, "I shall show you his room."

Timothy was not in the house when Mr. and Mrs. Woolley arrived next morning. He had gone to the village for cigarettes. There wasn't a cigarette in the house. Old Lowell belonged to the Anti-Nicotine League.

"I thought you might pass Mr. Seaquat on the road," said Mrs. Crosby-Kerr.

But they had not. "Although I want to see him," said Gertrude in her grim manner.

Gertrude had something to say first on her mother's slight in not coming to see her in town, on her own condition ("I feel sure it can not be diabetes,"), and finally on "this young man, this Seaquat or Peaquat, who may he be?"

It was all just as Gertrude had expected.

"It is very dear of you, very generous and tender-hearted, just like you in fact, dear mother, to want to help a young man who has been mixed up in some gambling scandal. Every-

thing you say indicates that he is a most reliable, trustworthy person, and I am sure his little songs are very entertaining and show a great deal of talent. But don't you think he ought to be in town near this office he is entering? They may need him before they expected. Luther will be delighted to lend him something to tide him along."

Mrs. Crosby-Kerr was very lofty.

"I see no reason why he should not stay here. There is certainly room. I enjoy having him. He told me definitely that there was no reason on earth to believe he would go to work before the month was over."

Virginia Vanderfahren's roadster deposited Timothy at the door only a few moments later.

"Hmmm," said Gertrude, peering out of a window at the scene.

### III

MRS. CROSBY-KERR made good her promise to show Timothy Cedric's room. It was exactly like the other bedrooms in the house, and in the houses of the majority of their neighbors. Only there were a few books a bit livelier in the way of binding and substance matter than were to be found in the other rooms: "The Filigree Ball," "The Circular Staircase," "In the Bishop's Carriage," "Three Weeks."

"Cedric selected those books himself," explained Mrs. Crosby-Kerr.

She had been surprised and evidently annoyed at entering the room, to find Luther there.

"Isn't your own room comfortable?" she inquired.

Luther had, it appeared, needed a fireplace wherein to burn some letters, and his own room lacked the convenience. His presence constrained her enthusiasm. She would have liked to linger over the reading lamp by the bed Cedric had arranged himself the better to enjoy his library, the rosewood desk on which he had written his letters, the view



of the garden from his windows.

"It's a beautiful room," Timothy declared, "and you know the minute you see it, that it didn't belong to any ordinary man. Don't you, Mr. Woolley?"

Mr. Woolley presumed you did.

That evening Timothy went to the movies alone, though he urged Mr. Woolley to go with him.

"It's Valentino, Mr. Woolley. Educational film!"

"I fear I am not interested," replied Luther.

Cabot, it appeared, had no such fears. Timothy spied her at once some rows ahead of him, and afterward was very willing to escort the young girl home to the manor. An agreeable ramble they had together, in which one thing and another was touched upon by way of conversation. At the great stone gates to the estate they naturally bethought themselves of the Crosby-Kerrs.

"Now," said Timothy, "wasn't it hard luck for that young fellow to have to go and die, when all he had to do was to live, to have all this?"

"Oh, he was terrible. He was wild, he was," said Cabot.

"Would you believe it?" said Timothy. "Such a nice looking kid, and so fond of literature, with a light to read by, by his bed and all."

"Yes, he was wild. He ran away and married an actress, he did. My, there was an awful row. It was in the papers."

"In the papers, was it? Did she die too?"

"Well, Mr. Seaquat, I'm not sure that I know. I don't know anything about that. They went to Alaska, and he died. That's all I know."

Timothy reflected a moment.

"I suppose she, being an actress, didn't want to get in the papers any more than she could help. I suppose she was too proud. And she didn't want to come back and have a lot of money that was her husband's. She was too proud for that. I guess she did die. I guess she did."

"There was more to it too," went on Cabot. "He had been engaged—"

"To someone else?"

"Yes. To that Miss Vanderfahren. His folks liked that. And all the time he was carrying on with this actress. Then he just ran away, and wrote a note. And what do you suppose Miss Vanderfahren said? 'So that's over,' she said. Yes, those were her words. Don't you think she's queer? My, I do! With all that money too! Awful cold type, I say."

The great house rose now before them. Timothy paused and studied its stretch of wings and terraces.

"And old brother Luther lands it all," he muttered.

He didn't fancy that idea. What the house needed was brightening up. Some young thing from the Follies, she could cheer up the old place. Have her friends out! But Luther! There at the top of the stairs, still thinking how little justice there is in the world, he ran into Luther himself, in the light from above the portrait.

Luther was just stealthily closing the door of Cedric's room.

"Oh, you!" he said.

Timothy smiled genially, but Luther hesitated and then beckoned to him.

"I wouldn't mention it to Mrs. Crosby-Kerr," he said, "that you saw me coming out of that room. She considers it in an unusual light. Shall we say, sacred in a way? I sometimes borrow a book or two. I like a little light reading now and then."

Timothy opened his eyes very wide, and became tremendously earnest.

"Mr. Woolley, I won't say a word. Just trust your friend, Timothy. Trust me every day, Mr. Woolley."

Mr. Woolley looked almost pleasant.

"Not that it's important, but you understand—"

Timothy vowed that he understood—but not everything perhaps. Per-



haps there was still an item in the household history he had missed. Phantoms of possible items rocked him to sleep at last, one particularly of a lovely young thing from the stage, heavy in *crêpe*, who haughtily disdained Kerr Manor.

However next morning he felt well rested and as alert as usual, and when he happened to spy Cabot at work dusting the sacred room of Cedric, he leaned against the doorpost and wished her "good morning."

Cabot was not at the moment cordial.

"It will look funny to Mrs. Crosby-Kerr if she sees you talking to me."

Timothy wasn't impressed.

"I wish you'd go," said Cabot next. "Clear out."

"You won't be here long," Timothy announced.

Cabot stopped short.

"I know I won't," she answered. "Not if you keep hanging around."

Timothy shook his head.

"It's got nothing to do with me. You're going into the movies, you are. And it's where you belong."

Cabot flushed. There was a mirror before her, and for steadying purposes she needed a glance therein. She didn't forget her work, but her sweep with the duster had taken on suddenly a long rhythmic swing, a swing to register beautifully on the screen.

"Fine," applauded Timothy, "and out in Hollywood don't forget to remember me to Mr. Shean, and to—"

"You know someone in Hollywood! Oh, Mr. Seaquat!"

In the excitement of the revelation Cabot forgot about Mrs. Crosby-Kerr and the proprieties, and never noticed the slight shove, which was yet sufficient to close the door, as Timothy sauntered in and settled himself in Cedric's desk-chair. Poor Cabot, with a few simple words Timothy cast a spell upon her, the surest *abracadabra*.

"You've got the screen face—"

She only crashed back to reality

when all at once she saw that Timothy had opened the drawer of the desk, and was nonchalantly peering within.

Cabot smothered a scream.

"That was locked," she cried.

"When you tried it last?" said Timothy. "Now you see it's opened and empty."

Cabot stared.

"I never supposed that drawer was empty," she said. "Why do you suppose they kept it locked?"

"Perhaps it wasn't always empty," Timothy drawled. "I don't imagine it always was." His fingers played lightly about the lock. "And I imagine too that someone who didn't have the key thought it worth while to open it with a little knife that made a few scratches, but they can be polished over when it's convenient."

Timothy not much later strolled up and down the rose garden indulging in the classic luxury of soliloquy, and the burden of his thought was the very antithesis of his great model. "How stale, flat and unprofitable—" There may at times be profit, Timothy was aware.

"It would be letters," he reflected, his eye fixed on Cedric's windows overhead. "And from what I hear of young Cedric he would never have kept in his day, locked in a drawer, his prize-marks from school. It would be love letters—and the point is," added Timothy, "that love letters manage to include sometimes other things than 'honey' and 'sweetie' and 'forever and forever' and such harmless stuff as that. Names and addresses and bits of news do get in—which later are more important than they seemed."

He stooped to pluck and sniff a leaf of sweet geranium.

"It's those little things that make letters worth stealing," he pursued, "and it's funny but true that I'm one of those people who never get interested in letters till someone else thinks they are worth stealing."



To end the soliloquy appropriately, for Luther was coming down the path, Timothy picked an Admiral Ward for his buttonhole. Luther was still genial this morning.

"How do you enjoy the country?" he inquired.

Timothy declared the rest and the fresh air were saving his life.

"But you'll want to be going back soon?"

Timothy sighed, and gazed about the garden. Yes, he must leave it soon, very soon.

"I was thinking," said Luther, "that if I could be of assistance, if I could advance you something to carry you along—"

He grew eloquent with generosity, very pressing indeed, and eventually did manage to persuade Timothy that he would not be inconvenienced in the least, and Timothy acknowledged that perhaps it were best he be on the spot. They might need him ahead of time: employers were often capricious in such matters.

Luther at once departed to write a check—"or wouldn't you rather have cash? I have a little extra on hand."

"Cash would be better," agreed Timothy, and resuming his soliloquy: "So you're all ready, brother Luther. What a hurry you're in to be rid of me! I guess you have your troubles too. Little inconveniences like having no fireplace to burn letters. Sometimes, brother Luther, it's just enough to know letters are worth burning—"

Then he went in to tell Mrs. Crosby-Kerr that he must go to town, and look after his affairs. She was very grieved at his decision.

"Not for years, Timothy, have I enjoyed my home so much as since you have been here. It was lonely, so lonely. You don't know, Timothy, how lonely it is for me."

"Yes, I do, Mrs. Crosby-Kerr, and I hope you will let me come back again."

## IV

HER last words warned him to look out for the company he kept, but judging by the first acquaintance he sought out in New York, her influence was not pervasive. Mrs. Crosby-Kerr would never approve in the world of Murray MacDonald—known as Murray "Magdelene" in his circle. Though where Timothy found him in his small apartment in the Forties, he looked harmless enough, even scholarly. The walls of his rooms were lined with books, the floor strewn with papers; but the books, soberly bound indeed, were volumes of *Town Topics* from that periodical's *prima vera*, and the papers, hilariously illustrated with long-lashed ladies in peignoirs astride comets and such gay fancies, were the special article sections of the journals called yellow.

For it was Mr. MacDonald's occupation to beguile a large public with tales of the wealthy and illustrious, their lives and habits on occasions when these proved worth attention. This public desired sprightly facts, and it must be said that Mr. MacDonald had little difficulty appeasing even their avid appetites. His writings were the *chronique scandaleuse* of the period, and if not as lively as those of Saint Simon, some fault must be laid to the libel laws of the country as well as his own style, which was more hectic than accurate.

Interrupted in his research work on the divorce history of Chicago gentry, he was delighted to oblige his old friend on the matter of the Crosby-Kerr affair. The silver lining of that cloud of scandal had given him a much needed vacation on the Riviera.

"Be sure and get your settlement before the ceremony," he advised.

Timothy didn't follow Mr. MacDonald.

"Aren't you going to marry the old lady?"



Timothy was explicit. Nothing at all of that sort was in the air. Mr. MacDonald was disappointed. He could see the headlines: "Another Marriage in the Crosby-Kerrs"—"Widow of Seventy Weds Penniless Youth—He Does Not Give Up Job."

Without hope of such copy he generously consented to ransack his scrap books for the public analyses of the romance of young Cedric and his actress bride. He discovered them soon enough, page after page, photographs, drawings, snapshots of the young Mrs. Cedric, *née* Aline Moss, well known for her dancing in "The Chocolate Soldier" and other Broadway successes. But the story had no follow-up, no sequel, no end. From earth and print the couple had disappeared. Young, beautiful, rich, even thus notorious, they had vanished from the ken of the news-hunters. One prowling reporter only hinted at rebuffs, and added a name and an address. "Nothing could be learned," ran his tart paragraph, "of the happy pair at the Everglade Apartments,—West 85th Street, where the bride had been living with her friend, Mrs. Iris Cushman, known for her comedy stunt in 'The Belle of the Bowery.' It is probable that Mrs. Cushman doesn't know anything anyway."

Timothy had some difficulty in locating Mrs. Cushman. In the last years she had moved every season, though seldom farther than around the block, once only next door. A matter of nerves, perhaps! Even when he found the house he had some trouble finding her in. She was not adverse to social life now and then, say every evening.

"Don't tell her I called," he told the elevator boy, "I want to surprise her. I'm her long-lost son."

"I guess that won't surprise her," said the boy.

But at last he learned she was at home, and alone as well, and dutifully he rang her bell. She peered at

him through the crack in the door, a large blondish lady with wisps of loose hair and a great supply of good nature tempered by suspicion. At that moment the suspicion was most active.

"Yes, it's Mrs. Cushman," she said, implying that he had no reason to be happy about it.

"I knew it," Timothy cried, "the minute I saw you. I knew you'd look like this."

This might certainly be a compliment.

"What do you want?" she said. "Say, young fellow, who are you anyway?"

Timothy was crestfallen.

"You're not very cordial," he sighed.

"Cordial," bellowed Mrs. Cushman. "What have I got to be cordial about to you? I'm not going to buy anything of you. And if you're a federal agent they'll tell you downstairs I'm a respectable woman, and never had a drink in my life."

While tears did not appear in Timothy's eyes, the little things would have been quite in place there. He leaned against the door ready to drop with fatigue. But he smiled. He looked up at Mrs. Cushman and smiled.

"It's New York," he explained. "Just New York! Honest, I'm so lonely I could die."

Mrs. Cushman had not answered her doorbell to witness a young man's tears; but she did not shut the door.

"So you go around from door to door and cry about it," she snorted.

Timothy smiled again, one of those brave smiles that poets have detected to play such a part in the affairs of history.

"I'm ready to," he confessed. "But, Mrs. Cushman, I thought Aline's friends would be different."

"Aline?"

"Aline Moss! Didn't she ever tell you about me? Seaquat? Timothy Seaquat?"



"That girl didn't tell me everything by a long shot," and then Mrs. Cushman relented and ordered him inside where he couldn't break the hearts of the neighbors with his tears.

With tragic eyes, and a break now and then in his voice, Timothy took some time of Mrs. Cushman's leisure telling how much Aline had meant to him, and now he had meant nothing at all to Aline. Of course, that was his luck. Women never took him seriously. Aline never had. Only once had she written him, but that time all about Mrs. Cushman. "She admired your looks so. She described just how you looked. I knew you the minute you opened the door. Aline was my ideal. I was younger then. I like larger women now."

Mrs. Cushman smoothed her capacious bosom, with care not to tangle her rings in the lace.

"I tell you what, Mr. Seaquat," she said, "I've got a little snatch of something—slipped through the harbor in the storm, and since you're a friend of Aline's—"

It appeared soon enough that Mrs. Cushman was lonesome, so lonesome. Yes, she had lots of friends, and she went out a lot. But what did it all mean? Where was it all leading? Timothy understood. He told her all about himself, so to speak. He was going to have a fine position in the real estate business. Fifty dollars a week! But it didn't begin for a month yet. Meanwhile he didn't have any money to do any entertaining on. Only yesterday he had seen her leaving the apartment, and naturally he had asked who she was, and when he heard it was Mrs. Cushman, Iris Cushman, he just had to come to see her. For Aline's sake!

"You poor dear," said Mrs. Cushman, measuring sugar. Of course he should come. Nothing was more unhealthy for a young man starting out on his career than brooding alone in a great city. Every young man

needed nice, refined friends— "Say when, dearie."

He sat down by the desk and wondered aloud if Aline had not perhaps written there her love letters, "with a lot about you in them."

Mrs. Cushman wouldn't tell the child for worlds that the desk had been thrown in with this new flat of hers. She helped him again to her little concoction. Weren't they growing too sad?—turn on the Victrola.

They became great friends in half an hour. Mrs. Cushman had never seen a young man who needed looking after so much as Timothy. If he lived through the summer, with the care he took of himself, it would be a miracle.

"You smoke too much, dearie."

"It doesn't matter if I do."

"Oh, go on."

"I can't live more than a year. I'll be pretty lucky if I get through the year. Heart and lungs! Inherited! I don't care. What's the use? Now that Aline's gone."

"That's wicked to talk that way." It made Mrs. Cushman cry. She had never "heard the like."

"Don't you brood over that girl," she ordered. "There are lots of other girls just as good as Aline, if they aren't so lucky. If you call it lucky to marry a millionaire who takes you up to Alaska, and then dies on you."

Timothy groaned.

"What did she do then? What could that poor little girl do then?"

"What do you think?" said Mrs. Cushman tartly. "She took the first train back to New York and her Iris, she did, like a sensible woman. Only," Mrs. Cushman sought again for her handkerchief, "it didn't help. She died too."

At that moment Timothy learned that they were not alone. The door into the bedroom opened and a child peered forth, still drowsy, upon the touching scene. A very handsome little fellow with blond curls and large blue eyes.



"Oh," exclaimed Timothy staring, "oh, your handsome little son?"

Mrs. Cushman dried her eyes.

"Nephew," she explained. "Come, dearie, come to your Aunt Iris."

"Want some lemonade?" said the little boy.

"Grown-up's lemonade," said Aunt Iris, and made a face, "Nasty!"

"Want some?" said the child.

"Oh, my," declared Mrs. Cushman, "I just can't refuse that child anything. Just a sip, darling!"

"I have just given up my life to that baby," she announced after the little thing had run back to its toys.

Timothy rose and strolled about the room, lost in thought, as the stage directions put it.

"And doesn't he look just like his papa," he all at once exclaimed, which natural remark had a very surprising effect upon Mrs. Cushman—at least she put down her glass on the table and forgot about it.

"What do you know about his papa?" she cried.

"I've just seen pictures of him, and I recognized him right off. Any one would."

He drew a chair up, and sat down opposite Mrs. Cushman, for a business discussion.

"He looks more like Cedric than he does like Aline after all," he went on, and then in a very chatty voice, "I'm an old friend of his grandma's. I run up to their place up the river when I want to be quiet and have a rest. Nice old lady!"

Mrs. Cushman dropped her hands.

"Now you do give me a shock," she said, "and she such a haughty old party, she won't even look at her grandson."

"No," reflected Timothy, "she never even spoke of him."

"You see! I'd like to know where we'd be, little Cedy and me, if we didn't have good, kind Uncle Luther—"

Timothy leaped from the chair and interrupted Mrs. Cushman, just put her off the track altogether. He

threw his arms around the alarmed lady, and smacked her a kiss on each cheek.

"You fresh thing," screamed Mrs. Cushman. "That child didn't shut the door either."

But Timothy was off, dancing and spinning about the room.

"Aren't brains wonderful?" he cried, which Mrs. Cushman thought true but irrelevant.

"I knew we'd come to Uncle Luther after a while," he went on. "But isn't it simple when you keep your eyes open!"

He was in such high spirits he broke into song:

*"Oh, the cabin boy was pretty,  
It really was a pity,  
The things we did,  
To that poor kid,  
Would ruin my little ditty."*

Poor Mrs. Cushman was quite dizzy, what with the grown-ups' lemonade and all this music and the general cavortings of this man. After all, she remembered, Aline had had some pretty funny friends.

"Now look here, young fellow," she began.

Timothy hastened to calm down her alarms.

"Don't you worry, Mrs. Cushman. You and I can manage Uncle Luther easy. What do you call the boy—Cushman?"

Mrs. Cushman, wishing she hadn't taken so much became very grave.

"I do," she said with dignity.

"That his Uncle Luther's idea?"

Mrs. Cushman wondered if the young man were clairvoyant, and granted it had been Uncle Luther's idea.

"But you're all wrong about grandma," Timothy continued, "and that's a big mistake, because it's grandma who has the money. Now I think you—and I—had better take little Cedric back where he belongs."

"But she don't want him," quavered Mrs. Cushman.

"Don't you believe it," said Timothy.



"She never heard of him. She doesn't know he exists. Uncle Luther is so afraid that Kerr Manor won't float his way that he burned up all Cedric's letters because Aline talked about you, and some day someone might come wondering along to see what happened to Cedric's wife, and that would be awkward—oh, very awkward—for Luther. Which is what happened, Iris, my sweet."

"After all, it is the old lady who has the money," said Mrs. Cushman, seeing a new light on the situation. Only a moment was she silent before she drew herself up with splendid righteousness.

"I'll see that child gets his rights, if—"

"If you have to take the reward for it. Or shall we say half the reward, dear Iris?"

"Now that's only fair," agreed Mrs. Cushman.

It didn't take them any time to come to a full understanding. Mrs. Cushman's conscience had always troubled her, it came to light. Down in the bottom of her heart she hadn't felt everything was quite right. But Luther's little allowance had been very regular.

"Don't worry about that," said Timothy airily. "Now that we are taking the expense of little Cedric's education off his shoulders he won't begrudge us something extra. You can put in your claim for past services. It seems very funny, but it's true, that one is paid highly in this world for doing nothing—that's for the future. All our old families understand that."

## V

THEY talked the matter over, pros and cons, and it finally decided that Timothy himself should take little Cedric by way of a surprise to his grandmother. He should see Uncle Luther, and explain the odd denouement to him. Of course if Uncle

Luther preferred that the whole matter be laid before his wife and mother-in-law that could be easily arranged. But probably he would feel that even more expensive in the long run.

Mrs. Cushman and Timothy thought there was no time like the present, and so the very next day Lowell was surprised to admit Timothy once more, and an inexplicable child as well.

"Cabot has run to Hollywood," he managed to whisper, as the one bit of gossip of the moment.

"It's about time," said Timothy, who had bigger business in hand.

Sure that Timothy's week of work had worn him out, Mrs. Crosby-Kerr ran down the stairs with outstretched hands. But as she crossed toward him, a round chubby head, with wavy golden hair and large blue eyes peered at her from behind Timothy's knees.

She paused and stared, and then she seemed drawn to him, and she sank on the floor beside the child, and as her arms went about him, her cry rang through the house, up the staircase where Luther was descending: "Cedric, my son."

"Grandson, m'am," corrected Timothy, and turned away to present a note to Luther.

"From our friend, Iris," he murmured.

Mrs. Crosby-Kerr called him:

"Timothy, you must stay here now always."

Timothy shook his head.

"Sorry, I can't," he kissed Mrs. Crosby-Kerr, "I shall come and see you and little Cedric sure enough. Now I'm running over to the Vanderfahrens for the week-end. They need me too."

His laugh made little Cedric also laugh. Only Luther was not carried away with gaiety at the moment.

"They need me, too," he repeated. "Honest, you rich people are an awful responsibility to the rest of us."



# In Praise and Detraction

By George Jean Nathan

## I

IN "Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary," St. John Ervine has taken all the puppets of standardized modern British light comedy from the shuffling and benign vicar of the parish to his placidly sweet and knitting gray-haired wife, from their languidly lounging son with the Rugby "hillo" in place of "hello" to their ultra-modern young niece with the blunt views of love and marriage, and from the equally inevitable tall, grayish K. C. ex-governor of Andabar to the acidulous spinster suffragette; he has taken, further, the old star actress role of the invincibly witty and irresistible actress who brings all the men to her feet; he has taken, still further, the stenciled scenes of the vicarage garden and the drawing-room—and out of these moss-grown materials has fashioned a bright, humorous and sophisticated, if sometimes strained, evening's entertainment. For all the staleness of his ingredients, his play is fresh, quite charmingly given to critical self-snickers, and not infrequently revelatory of a very good grade of light wit. It is a play written deliberately, almost shamelessly, for the popular theatre which only here and there permits itself to forget that it was nevertheless written by a gentleman of taste with a respect for letters. It is a serviceable and engaging combination of quality and box-office.

It is, as I have observed, light, fluffy stuff but like such other light, fluffy things as "The Blind Bow-Boy," Irene Bordoni's "Gondola" ditty and beer foam, tasty, diverting and welcome enough in these dry amusement

days. Ervine surely wrote this play with an ironic twinkle in his eye. In the first place, he dedicated it to John Drinkwater! And in the second place, he guaranteed its certain production by laying on the pretty grease so thickly in the matter of the star role that no star comedy actress in the English-speaking world over the age of forty-five could, he well appreciated, hesitate to gather up her skirts and go hot-foot after the rights to it. By way of illustration, I quote his description of this star actress' role and the eulogies which he has placed in the mouths of his characters:

1. Mary Westlake, a beautiful and famous actress.
2. "She is a good actress, both morally and technically."
3. "If Geoffrey falls in love with Mrs. Westlake he will only be doing what all nice, well-bred boys ought to do!"
4. "She is a brilliant and charming woman."
5. "She is an *extraordinary* woman."
6. "Most women are obvious. But she's wonderful! So spontaneous, so incalculable! At one moment she has the simple, demanding nature of a child, and at the next the imperious manner of an empress."
7. "Isn't she a lovely woman? *Isn't she?*"
8. "My dear girl, you must have noticed. *She's beautiful!*"
9. "You're too great an artiste, too great a genius. . . ."
10. "She has few rivals as an actress."



11. "She hasn't many rivals as a woman."

I give only a few samples, omitting the score of flattering passages wherein the star role is wooed ardently by a handsome youth, is capitulated to by the erstwhile adamant elderly bachelor-diplomat, is permitted to appear fresh as a daisy at breakfast when the other characters are frayed out and miserable, and so on. But Ervine has covered up the whole obvious shenanigan with so gay a tarpaulin of humor that only an excessively sour eye would be minded to penetrate beneath. He has taken a lot of mildewed ingredients and boiled them into a fetching theatrical stew. Mrs. Fiske, for whose talents as an actress in the more serious drama and the more profound comedy I have never privileged myself an undue measure of enthusiasm, is shrewdly suited to Ervine's shrewdly fabricated central role. Her performance, for all its unvarying familiarity, is an amusing one. The rest of the cast is so undistinguished, however, that three-quarters of the play's intrinsic values go for utterly nothing. Mr. Belasco's new system of stage illumination is eminently successful.

## II

NOTHING would be so easy as to write flippantly of the Italian marionettes lately imported by Mr. Dillingham, and nothing would be so difficult as to write of them soberly and seriously. They, as all marionettes, fall into that middle ground which, approached critically, is to be viewed soundly only with an amalgam of sobriety and light irony. And it is because the directing talents of the Teatro dei Piccoli, of Rome, fully appreciate the truth of this point of view and themselves act upon it in their handling of the marionettes that their little theatre has become one of the two deservedly leading marionette houses in the world. I observe,

however, that this very virtue of the Piccoli functionaries has been confusedly regarded by the local reviewing troupe as a deficiency. Although the Piccoli has always been conscious of the absurdity of presenting the marionettes in any but an approximately absurd manner, although it has ever astutely presented them as puppets with strings always, and hands occasionally, showing—although, further, it has sagaciously emphasized the toy quality above everything—the local wise men have criticized as faults these very things that are, and ever have been recognized as, the Piccoli's greatest merits.

Marionettes, however, whether good or bad, I generally find pretty tiresome after half an hour. They appeal to the child in one and, as in the case of all toys, the child in one tires quickly. Furthermore, marionette performances nine times in ten are made tedious because of the quality of material that is customarily visited upon them. With the same kind of material, living actors would be equally wearisome. The greatest all-star cast in America, called upon to play the usual marionette material, would empty a theatre by ten o'clock.

## III

THE play signed by Avery Hopwood has become as standardized as a St. Patrick's Day parade. If it isn't a husband who falls in love with his divorced wife, it is a misogynistic bachelor who falls in love with the woman who passes herself off as his wife, and if it isn't either of these it is the supposedly dead husband who wins back the love of his theoretical and flirtatious widow or the husband whose wife wins him back by flirting coquettishly with his best friend. This fable—I employ the singular since, whatever it is, Hopwood always tells it in exactly the same way—is invariably set forth with the aid of one comic butler, a door leading suggestively to a bedroom, a phonograph



that plays one of Fyscher's amorous ditties, three naughty epigrams paraphrased from Sacha Guitry, a loud laugh from some comedy produced in Budapest during the previous summer, a suit of lady's pajamas made by Paul Poiret, the second act curtain from "Divorçons" to the accompaniment of the first act tag from Romain Coolus' "Mirette A Ses Raisons," a carafe of whisky and two siphons, and a minor character named Lulu in a red dress.

"Little Miss Bluebeard," Hopwood's latest, pulls along on the old tracks. There is only one new thing in it and that is a comical line not from Gabriel Dregely's "A Kisassony Ferje" ("His Wife's Husband")—to which Hopwood acknowledges his indebtedness for several episodes—but from another comedy of the Hungarian playwright's known, if I recall the title correctly, as "The Man in the Dress Suit." Hopwood's work, originally fresh, allusive and saucily lively, is getting poorer and poorer. His erstwhile light devilry is in sore need of having its face lifted; it is full of crow's feet. His efforts at naughty epigram are of the *Snappy Stories* genre; his efforts at risqué situation so stale that they are pitiable. Indeed, I begin to wonder if we all didn't overestimate Hopwood, if we didn't take many things on trust that may not have been in his own original work. Let us, looking back from the confounding desolateness of his present achievements, not fail to recall that some of the best humor of "Fair and Warmer" bore a very close resemblance to the humor of certain farces of Max Maurey and his Guignol aides, that the richly comical butler episode of "Our Little Wife" bore a close resemblance to an episode in a familiar boulevard farce by Rip and Bousquet, that the excruciating calendar scene of "Sadie Love" was a crib from Sacha Guitry's "Prise de Berg-op-Zoom," and that "Double Exposure" and the German von Scholz's "Vertäuschte Seelen"

had a great, great deal in common.

Miss Irene Bordon, an attractive personality and a thoroughly fetching comedienne if she gets a play that gives her a chance, does what she can with the present doldrums, but finds herself battling against a heavy and not especially salty surf. Her elaborate change of gowns every few minutes makes the proceedings doubly dull and idiotic. Bruce McRae and Eric Blore are the most competent members of the supporting troupe. The setting of the first two acts, "Larry Charters' flat in London," credited in design and execution to Hermann Rosse, would seem to suggest that Mr. Rosse imagines that London bachelor apartments very closely resemble the Greenwich Village Follies.

#### IV

ARTHUR HOPKINS has said that any play with a good second act is pretty well on the way to being a good play. I venture the opinion that any farce with a too good last act is pretty well on the way to being a poor farce. And for a reason that is so simple that it is in all probability wrong. If there has ever been a first-rate farce whose last act was better than its second, I am not privy to its name. When the third act of a farce is better than the preceding act, it invariably means that the author has cheated the second act by holding out of it amusing material that rightfully belonged in it so that he might bolster up the generally difficult terminal act with the material thus hoarded. The result is a sacrifice of the second act in behalf of the third. And the second result is a loss of the audience's interest at a play's most critical point, with the regaining of that interest when it is too late. Show me a farce with an excellent last act and I'll show you a farce that four times out of five is not a popular success. The great farce successes of the last fifteen years, in America and in Europe,



were farces whose second acts were strong and whose last acts were comparatively weak. From "Baby Mine" and "Fair and Warmer" in America to "Die Spanische Fliege" and "Ein Reizender Mensch" in the Central Empires, and from "Madame Presidente," "Le Père La Frousse" and "Les Deux Canards" in France to such enormously prosperous piffles as "A Little Bit of Fluff" and "Tons of Money" in England, one finds the truth of this.

The trouble—or at least one of the troubles—with "The Whole Town's Talking," the Emerson-Loos farce founded upon a German diversion, lies in a third act so very good that it is plain the authors sacrificed their second act to it. Had they utilized for this presently dull second act the materials which they held in reserve for their third—these materials might have been made to fit the second act with perfect ease—they would unquestionably have achieved the immediate and considerable success that now hangs in the balance. The excellent last act episode wherein the vengeful movie director is brought to melt through the quotation to him of the beautiful sentiments from his own moron movie titles might, for example, have been incorporated into the middle act by the simple device of having the fellow either turn turtle at the conclusion of his weeping or slowly realize that his seductive opponent is ringing in on him certain titles of some rival Griffith. But what most ails the farce is less the fault of the authors than the fault of the actors whom the authors have chosen to play the farce. If ever a troupe of actors knew nothing of farce playing, this is the troupe. Effect after effect is lost. Scene after scene is dropped. Mr. Emerson is the head of the Actors' Equity Association. It was reported after the first performance of "The Whole Town's Talking" that he had applied for immediate election to the Protective Managers' Association.

## V

BOOTH TARKINGTON'S "Magnolia," on the other hand, is an argument against Hopkins' theory that a play with a good middle act is likely to be a good play. It has a good middle act, and it is not a good play. What imagination and humor the author has had in this instance he has dumped entirely into his second act; his first and third acts are merely overture and exit march. Although I am sick of criticizing this or that three-act play by observing sagaciously that it is a one act play told in three acts, I fear that I shall here have to trot out the old rubber-stamp once again. As in the instance of the Emerson-Loos piece, Tarkington's play suffers from an inaccurate performance in its central rôle. Leo Carrillo is not a romantic actor and his efforts in that direction are approximately as persuasive as a waltz tune at breakfast. I have always felt, if perhaps not always believed, that no man has ever been a successful romantic actor save he was in himself something of a romantic figure. This may, for all I know, be perfect nonsense and I shall be glad to retract it upon receipt of contradictory evidence. Yet my experience of the theatre has impressed upon me the peculiar and outlandish conviction that an actor cannot, whatever his proficiency and whatever his talents, act a Faversham or a George Alexander or an Edgar Becman rôle unless he be a Faversham or an Alexander or a Becman. Nonsense or not nonsense, it is, as I see it, quite the same as expecting a George Arliss, with all his ability and skill, to be a Rodolph Valentino, for all the latter's lack of that same ability and skill. The last thing that a romantic actor needs is high talent; the first thing that a romantic actor needs is a highly romantic personality.

## VI

A. E. THOMAS writes better English than three-quarters of the contemporary American playwrights; he



has a more cultivated point of view and a finer quality of humor; he is never cheap; and his plays are generally extremely boring. They never, in the favorite designation of Winthrop Ames, "sing." They are polished and intrinsically available; they are ably and intelligently planned; and they are as lifeless as an essay by the average college professor. His latest effort is "The Jolly Roger" which has everything in it that should make an interesting play and which is yet an uninteresting play. A romantic comedy drama of pirates and cutlasses and the Spanish Main—the sort of thing that should sweep along in a mad blaze of laughing scarlet and sinister black—it unrolls itself precisely, laboriously and flatly before the eye in terms of a Sydney Grundy play of thirty years ago with a blue cyclorama substituted for the old yellow drawing-room and with the characters divested of their swallowtails and dressed instead like the Castle Square Opera Company. The swish of the sea is like a mere off-stage seltzer siphon; the oaths are oaths in sound only; the pirates are neither fish, flesh, fowl nor good red Penzance.

Thomas ever impresses me as writing for a theatre that he condescendingly considers much too vulgar and to which he desires to bequeath a note of aloof refinement. But the species of refinement which he contributes is translatable as sheer lack of strength—the transparent suavity and overly amiable manners that a man exhibits in the presence of another man bigger than himself who is threatening to lick him. Thomas is subconsciously afraid of the theatre, and seeks to beat it by being nice to it. A trace of brusque vulgarity is essential to first-rate drama, since drama is, in the Latin sense, primarily a vulgar art. Shakespeare is often as vulgar as Catherine Chisholm Cushing is habitually refined. Thomas' dramatic Eng-

lish is smooth and elaborately precise, as trousers meticulously hung from concealed suspenders and scanned pro and con from various angles before a pier glass are smooth and precise. It lacks ease and swing and attractive dramatic wrinkles. His humor is analytically sound humor, but it does not evoke a smile or a laugh. It lacks spontaneity; it is too conscious of itself—like a man at his first fancy dress ball.

The play has been beautifully mounted by John Wolcott Adams and Raymond Sovey. Pedro de Cordoba is miscast in a rôle that would have delighted Faversham. Miss Carroll MacComas is particularly good in the leading woman's rôle.

## VII

"THE CROOKED SQUARE" is Samuel Shipman's masterpiece, the flower of a career devoted to beautiful letters. Seldom before has the American theatre been visited with so rich and mellow a gift. The culture of ancient Greece, the vigor of Rome in its glory, the imagination of France under the Louis, the color of Spain in the seventeenth century, to say nothing of the puissant smell of the New Jersey meadows back of Newark, are all, with but four exceptions, here assembled. Beside this chef d'œuvre the greatest play that Dr. Louis K. Anspacher has ever concocted pales into insignificance. Shipman has borne out our predictions and exceeded our fondest hopes. He has produced a drama richer in theatrical *tripaille*, more abundant in genuine *legumi*, and with a finer, nobler savor of the *Leimfabrikanlage* than Broadway has known in years. Criticism is mute before such resplendent genius. I therefore but modestly bend myself far in at the brassière, scrape the floor with my fez, and commend the epic to Prof. William Lyon Phelps for the Pulitzer prize.



## VIII

THE meritorious play that is implicit in the one currently called "The Changelings" is always a considerable number of jumps ahead of the talents of the present author, Mr. Lee Wilson Dodd. With the potential merit that is ever disconcertingly flapping the tail of its chemise at him in its eel-like scoot around the corner, he is, for all his valiant and clearly audible hard breathing, never able to catch up. Never? Well, perhaps just once, and then only for a fleeting moment: this, a scene in the second act between two oldsters, a man and a woman, wherein they humorously ponder their ineradicable old-fashioned decency. But aside from this solitary episode the play that Mr. Dodd has managed is, for all its intense effort at modernity, little more than an inferior English drawing-room comedy of two score years ago given a speciously contemporaneous air by embellishing it with allusions to Freud and with such bits of Prohibition stage business as an elaborate smacking of lips upon the tasting of illicit schnapps. A mixture in plot of "The Famous Mrs. Fair," "Mary the Third" and a dozen comedies fore and aft, the play is made further irritating by the priggishness of the author, a priggishness whose generally discernible ectoplasm takes the form either of smugly centering all the vices (frequently dubious) in the person of a villain who amounts to a caricature and then bringing all the other male characters periodically to threaten to punch him in the jaw, or halting the play every now and again to let the male star and the woman star take the middle of the stage and lift a hymn to morality. The net effect is hence of a sermon occasionally interrupted by a small boy with a pea-shooter, the small boy being possessed of a very weak pair of lungs.

To the performance of this manuscript there has been brought a company that includes such names as

Henry Miller, Blanche Bates, Laura Hope Crews, Ruth Chatterton, Geoffrey Kerr and Reginald Mason, which in a manner of speaking is something like chartering the *Aquitania* to carry a picture post card to Southampton. Through sheer force of personality, these actors are able to make physically interesting certain passages of a text that is dramatically sterile. But what a waste of high skill in this day when high skill is to be so greatly prized. It takes little head-scratching to summon forth the names of certain worth-while plays that a company like this might convert into first-rate theatrical nourishment. The sparkle of Bates, the quiet humor of Crews, the steadily increasing dramatic skill of Chatterton (she has rid herself of all the old mannerisms and shows very real improvement), the solid grounding of Miller—all dissipated upon the stuff of the box-office, all thrown to the winds. A justifiable antic for the general run of actors who are chronically hard up, who need the money to live on, and who have no theatrical ideals, but hardly one for actors like these who have given evidence in the past that there is something finer in them, and something more artistically a-dream, than the mere price of a ticket.

"The Changelings," incidentally, is another of the many plays that lowers the lights for one minute and, upon raising them again, asks us to believe that in this one minute one year has passed, that a baby has been born to the couple upon whose reconciliation the lights went down just sixty seconds before, that the husband who has been in love with another woman has changed his mind during the period of darkness, gone back to his wife and become a bosom pal of the husband of the other woman, that everyone has laid in a completely new and very elaborate wardrobe, etc. All that I can say, and with becoming modesty, is this: that I doubtless have as good an imagination as the next man, but I'll be doggoned if I can do it!



## IX

HAVING already climbed aboard several other soap-boxes to exhort the 100,000,000 citizens of These States to run around to the Apollo Theatre the first night they have off and take a look at a comedian named W. C. Fields, I proceed to climb aboard this one as well in order to make the same plea. Here is the most gorgeous scaramouch of the season, a creature of infinite drollery, a fellow out of the pages of Mark Twain, and what is more—he nonchalantly throws it into the bargain—an actor of genuine parts. Show me the man who says that he is sick of the theatre. Fields I promise you, will cure him where a dozen Moscow Art companies might fail. And where the show in which he is playing—it is called "Poppy"—would doubtless fail doubly.

## X

"PETER WESTON," by the Messrs. Dazey and Osmun, is Mirbeau's "Les Affaires Sont Les Affaires" rewritten for the Sears-Roebuck trade. It is dull and commonplace stuff that is interesting only as a study of the peculiar Broadway conception of moral and ethical dramatic values. The Messrs. Dazey and Osmun's central character is a captain of industry. This character is presented as an unscrupulous villain who employs every person and every means he can lay his hands on to further his own purpose in life. The unscrupulousness of this Dazey-Osmun villain is based upon the following facts and circumstances: 1. When his son is accused of murder, he seeks to save him by every device, fair or foul, within his power—the foul means being, specifically, to persuade his daughter to help him protect the boy's life by siding with him against

the man who has seduced her; 2. When he learns from her own lips that his daughter is about to give birth to an illegitimate child, he is very angry, and declares that she has sullied his name and his standing in the community; 3. When his younger son gets drunk, he irascibly orders the lad to behave himself or clear out of his house; 4. When a weakling and an incompetent lets his own factory go to pot, he takes it over without further ado, makes a success of it, and gives the former owner a good job; 5. When a maid servant who has been in his employ less than a day seeks to make trouble for him and his family, he tries to get rid of her; and 6. When his son is condemned to die for murder in the first degree—a clearly unjust charge and verdict—he seeks by hook or crook to get the governor of the state to issue a pardon. As punishment for these sins, and as a moral lesson to unscrupulous men of his stamp, the Messrs. Dazey and Osmun cause their central character to lose his mind in the last act.

Frank Keenan plays the lead in the approved small-time vaudeville manner and is assisted by a split-second cast.

## XI

IN "Chains," by Jules Eckert Goodman, I can see nothing. If you desire to learn of all the great virtues that repose in such a play and to which I, in my ignorance, am anesthetic, I shall have to refer you to the columns of the newspapers.

## XII

ON the two sumptuous new revues, that on view in the Music Box and the Greenwich Village Follies, I shall lecture at length, and with all the old eloquence, anon.





# Notices of Books

By H. L. Mencken

## I

FOUR books by doctors of physic, and all of them amusing: "Post-Mortem," by Dr. C. MacLaurin (*Cape*); "The Doctor Looks at Literature," by Joseph Collins (*Doran*); "Cures," by Dr. James J. Walsh (*Appleton*), and "The Biology of Death," by Dr. Raymond Pearl (*Lippincott*). Perhaps "amusing" is not a decorous word to apply to Dr. Pearl's book, for it is a serious scientific work, brought out under the editorship of a committee headed by Dr. Jacques Loeb; nevertheless, there is so little of the bow-wow laboratory manner in it, and so much shrewd observation and independent and incisive reflection that I let the epithet stand. What Dr. Pearl sets himself to answer, in brief, are two questions, first, Why does man die? and second, What may be done to postpone that inevitable act? The first question may seem absurd to most readers, for the inevitability of death is perhaps the only fact upon which the whole human race agrees. Only the followers of the late Pastor Russell, so far as I know, dispute it, and even these Russellites, though they expect to escape Bright's disease and pneumonia, nevertheless look to have their earthly lives terminated by being snatched up to Heaven. All the same, death is by no means a biological necessity. The cells that man is made up of are all theoretically immortal. In a suitable medium, properly fed, warmed and protected against accident, every one of them might go on dividing and redividing for all eternity. Every cell that exists today, in fact, has existed since

the first cell separated itself on Creation morning from the colloidal mind of God. I do not mean that it is simply an heir and assign of all the cells that have gone before it; I mean that it is a *part* of all the cells that have gone before it—that their essential substance is still in it, unchanged throughout all time. In our own bodies there are cells just as ancient, to wit, the cells which, when brought into contact with similar cells from an individual of the opposite sex under suitable legal, theological and physiological circumstances, undergo changes which culminate in the birth of a new human being. These cells seem to be transmitted from parent to child almost unchanged. They are to be detected in the youngest embryo. They are immortal in the same way that every drop of water in the sea is immortal.

But man always dies. Why? Simply, says Dr. Pearl, because the cells from which he springs, in the course of their multiplication and differentiation to form the various parts of his body, have become so highly interdependent that it is now more and more difficult for some of them to function and keep alive. A brain cell, for example, cannot exist for more than a few moments unless there is a heart cell somewhere pumping food to it and carrying away its excreta. If that service ceases, it will die either of starvation or of auto-intoxication. All the other cells in the enormously complex cell community called the human body are similarly dependent upon the efforts of others for their existence. Most of them must have food of a highly specialized sort; nearly all need heat as well as nourishment;



very few have private means of getting rid of their own slops. Thus, damage to one group—by trauma, by starvation, by cold, by the assault of foreign organisms—is pretty sure to be followed by damage to other groups, and so the whole machine goes to pieces and the man dies. But not all at once. When the cells which make up the heart muscles cease to function, what we call death ensues instantly, but there are parts of the body that do not actually die until the parts already dead begin to poison them, or the embalmer douses them with formaldehyde, or the grave worms gobble them. These parts, theoretically, might be kept alive forever. Some of them *have* been kept alive for a dozen years. At the moment of what we call death they are often in perfect health, and engaged busily in reproducing their kind. When the news reaches them that the only universe they know has come to an end and is about to be buried by the Freemasons, they are probably very unpleasantly surprised.

Dr. Pearl attempts a minute study of the relative vulnerability of the different parts of the body, with some very interesting results. In infancy, it is usually the digestive tract that is *weakest*, but after the age of one year and until the age of 50, it is the lungs. Then, in males, it is the circulatory system until the end. In females, at 50, the digestive tract displaces the lungs in first place, but only for ten years. After 60 women as well as men tend to die of diseases of the heart and arteries. Curiously enough, the organs that developed latest in the evolution of man are the most efficient, and break down least often. His nervous system is infinitely more complex and delicate than, say, his respiratory system; yet it is many times as durable. It is rare for him to die of a disease of the eye or ear, but his lungs and stomach take him off with great facility. Dr. Pearl believes that these ancient organs are relatively vulnerable because their functions are relatively simple—and nature seldom does more than meet absolute

necessities. Once the thing will work, it is let alone. The lungs began to work many, many ages ago, and still *keep* their old crude design. But it took aeons of experiment to perfect the nervous system, and it would not work until it was extremely well designed. A human designer of decent skill, given the means at the hand of the Creator, could design a far better human body than the one which now houses our souls. Even the nervous system is still full of gross imperfections; as for the lungs, they are laughably crude compared to an ordinary electric fan. The subject is one upon which I have discoursed at various times in the past. The last time some Fundamentalist wrote in to challenge me to propose improvements, say, in the eye. I seize the opportunity to say that I am now engaged upon a scheme of such improvements, and shall submit it to a candid world anon. Meanwhile, I commend Dr. Pearl's book to the nobility and gentry. It is couched in such terms that any educated person should be able to read it with entertainment and profit. Some of its principal contents I have not mentioned—discussions of the effects of public hygiene, of the probable course of the population curve in the United States during the next century or two, and so on. Every page of it is interesting.

Dr. Collins' volume has been very widely discussed, and so I need not describe it. It seems to me that the best part of it is the first chapter, in which the author rehearses all of the prevailing theories in psychology, and shows how little scientific plausibility is in most of them. His discussion of specific books and authors is always novel and daring, but sometimes far from illuminating. What he says about James Joyce's "Ulysses," for example, might have been said just as well by a college professor of English; in the main, he simply summarizes the book, and points out its obvious relation to the author's private experience. His treatment of Sinclair Lewis' "Babbitt" is far more informing. He detects a



number of weak spots in the psychological structure of that celebrated tale, and supports his objections with sound reasoning. The answer to all such criticism, of course, is that a novelist is not a scientist but an artist—that he is by no means bound to show the strict conscience of an inquirer working in a laboratory. All one may reasonably ask of him is that he refrain from violating the ordinary probabilities—that the transactions he depicts, and the motives underlying them, be recognizable and tolerably convincing. If he encounters a phenomenon that he cannot explain scientifically, he is still perfectly free to describe it as he sees it. This is what Lewis did more than once in "Babbitt." I suspect that Babbitt was often puzzling to him, but I also suspect that Hamlet was often puzzling to Shakespeare. Dr. Collins' literary tastes and judgments are sometimes very unusual. His praise of Harry Leon Wilson's "Bunker Bean," for example, would probably strike most professional critics as excessive, and he appears to accept quite naively the current theory that the late Katherine Mansfield was a very profound writer. Unluckily for his position, he gives some examples of this profundity, and they all turn out to be nothing of the sort. But it is pleasant to see a man of his equipment undertake the task that he tackles in his book. It shows a great deal of intelligent reflection, and it will have a good effect upon contemporary criticism. The literary gents have been anatomizing the doctors for centuries; it is salubrious for a doctor to turn upon the literary gents.

Dr. MacLaurin's "Post-Mortem" is made up of essays speculating upon the pathological history of various celebrated characters, from Anne Boleyn to Napoleon I and from the Empress Theodora to Benvenuto Cellini. The author complains that his remoteness from great libraries—he is a surgeon in practise at Sydney, Australia—greatly hampered his investigations into the maladies that afflicted these extinct magnificoes, but the reader will prob-

ably not notice any lack in his book. For what he misses in the way of scientific completeness, he makes up for in charm. His volume, indeed, has held me from the first word to the last, and I only hope he follows it with another of the same general character. What a chapter he could write on the dropsy of Dr. Johnson, on the hallucinations of Mohammed, on the great pox of Schopenhauer. I mention this last especially because Dr. MacLaurin is the only writer I have ever encountered who could write about syphilis without being either pecksniffian or horrible; he does it admirably in his chapter on Anne Boleyn and Henry VIII. Schopenhauer, somewhere in his letters, complains bitterly about the vast doses of mercury that were given to him by his physicians. The chances are that his whole pessimism was inspired by this almost unbearable treatment. If Dr. MacLaurin tackles him and then passes to Nietzsche, I hereby warn him that his diagnosis will probably be in error if he puts down lues. For years I accepted as true the common rumor that old Friedrich succumbed to the malady of kings, but some time ago I was warned by his disciple, Dr. Oscar Levy, himself a physician, that no evidence for it could be adduced. Nietzsche's malady, whatever it was, apparently differed very considerably from general paralysis. Let Dr. MacLaurin investigate it at length; it has been described by various friends. And let him, by all means, do a chapter in his next volume on the death of the Emperor Frederick, which provided the first example of a spectacle now visible every time a sovereign dies—consultants pouring in from all directions, each eager only to shoulder the others from the bedside, and the whole pack glaring and bawling at one another as the eminent patient sheds his k.k. clay and goes serenely winging to meet his God.

Dr. Walsh's book is an encyclopediac treatise upon quacks and quackeries, from the colossal doses of the medieval physicians to osteopathy and from Dr. Elisha Perkins and his tractors to Chris-



tian Science. What is common to all these frauds, says Dr. Walsh, is that they undoubtedly work cures—not always or generally, of course, but often enough to convince a sufficiency of dupes. The truth is that in a great many pathological conditions of an obscure sort, almost any imaginable remedy, so long as the patient is capable of believing in it, will do some good. In not a few such conditions, indeed, the patient's capacity for believing in nonsense is an essential part of his disease. Persons so afflicted are by no means rare; it is probable, I venture, that at least a third of the men and women of today who complain of vague malaises and travel from doctor to doctor are beset by disorders that lie quite outside the range of Osler. In truth, the proportion must be higher. For one woman who is down with a definite gastritis or arthritis there must be fully a dozen who are afflicted by dim, baffling discomforts that have their origin in the fact that the human husband, at best, is a very imperfect creature. Such discomforts, which start as mere psychic discontents, tend to draw others to them, chiefly of a so-called "nervous" nature. In the end, there is another sad face in the doctor's waiting-room, and the doctor himself confronts a problem that is quite beyond him. If he is lazy, of independent means and gifted with humor, he sends his patient to the nearest chiropractor, internal bath quack, Christian Science healer or psychoanalyst at once, and so gets rid of her and sees her cured. But, as Dr. Walsh points out, the fact that a cure often cures is by no means proof that it is a cure. Confronted with a case, say, of hydrophobia, Christian Science is absolutely helpless; it can only deny preposterously that the dog that bit the patient was mad. Quack cures work only so long as they are not tested scientifically—that is, only so long as they are employed against conditions that, once the patient ceased to worry about them, would get better anyhow. All of them that are now popular—Christian Science, osteopathy, chiropractic, etc.—

accomplish good results in this twilight zone of pathology. They bring great relief to hordes of vaguely unhappy women. But in the face of demonstrable pathological lesions they are of no avail.

Whenever you encounter a Christian Science healer who says that he has cured a patient of cancer you will behold a Christian Science healer who is a great liar. And he will still lie when he tries to explain that he himself didn't do it at all, but that it was done by the All, working mystically through his bank account and the immortal book of Mrs. Eddy.

## II

THE late F. M. Dostoevsky happens to be one of the great writers whose works I have never been able to read, and so it may be justly charged that I approach his "Letters and Reminiscences," translated by S. S. Koteliensky and J. Middleton Murry (*Knopf*), without the proper reverence. If it be so, then I can only report that there is nothing in the book itself to fan that reverence to flame. It seems to me, indeed, to be very stupid stuff, and Dostoevsky emerges from it as an almost incredibly silly fellow. The main passion of his mind, as it is revealed by his letters to his wife and to various friends, was a raucous and nonsensical jealousy of Turgenev. The slightest politeness to Turgenev set him to gnawing his nails; a whoop from an admirer brought him down with epilepsy. Why he should have feared and hated his eminent contemporary so dreadfully is hard to understand. The two men were trying to do quite different things, and Turgenev seems to have been more than generous in his attitude toward Dostoevsky. But Dostoevsky could not think of Turgenev without breaking into a cold sweat; his every reference to him is spiteful and disgusting. I can recall no other such childish literary enmity. Goethe and Schiller, Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, Tennyson and Browning, Zola and Flaubert—all these literary



twins were friends, or, if not friends, then at least honorable rivals. Even Thackeray and Dickens were polite to each other; even Ibsen and Björnson, though they quarrelled over politics, shook hands at last and became the joint grandfathers of half a dozen bouncing little Norwegians. But Dostoevsky always thought of Turgenyev as one Broadway actor thinks of another. When the Moscow Elks invited the two of them to a celebration in honor of the memory of Poushkin, good Fiodor Mihailovich choked on the caviare every time Ivan Sergueyevich was cheered by the assembled bibuli.

But if Fiodor Mihailovich was thus a petty fellow, his wife, the good Anna Gregorevna, was apparently a down-right idiot. This attentive creature was his stenographer before he married her; he had had another wife, but had felt her long before, and somehow got rid of her. Anna Gregorevna's reminiscences are devoted almost wholly to puerile details of their domestic life—how, during their absence in Germany, Olga Vasilievna, their St. Petersburg servant, died, and how her cousin came to town and seized the furniture that she was in charge of—how the son of Dostoevsky's first wife, the scoundrelly Pavel Alexandrovich Isayev, stole the silver frames off a pair of icons belonging to the second wife of his late mother's second husband—how a villainous parlor-maid, name unknown, "deliberately, out of spite" threw a whole tray of china and cut glass on the floor in the house of Marie Gregorevna, the sister of Anna Gregorevna, the wife of the aforesaid Fiodor Mihailovich, the enemy of Ivan Sergueyevich. Such drivel, in a sense, is amusing. One reads on lazily, somehow caressed by the thought that the wives of great geniuses are just as bad as the wives of other men. But I doubt that any sane person would argue seriously that entertainment of that sort is beneficial to the spirit. It is too much like peeping through a keyhole at a beautiful girl polishing her glass eye. I get a

more refined mirth out of one of the notes at the end of the volume, evidently from the hand of Comrade Murry. In speaking of Mihail Efgrafovich Saltykov, one of the friends of Fiodor Mihailovich, he says that Mihail Efgrafovich wrote one of the greatest of Russian novels, "*The Golovlevs*," "which has been translated into French and *American*, but not yet into *English*." Comrade Murry, as everyone knows, is one of the most eminent critics now flourishing in the Motherland—in fact, a perfect whale of a big-wig. I commend his oblique and tart remark to the notice of the Rev. Dr. Henry Van Dyke, Prof. Dr. Fred N. Scott and Prof. Dr. Brander Matthews, all eloquent exponents of the doctrines that *American* and *English* are identical languages, and that anyone who presumes to doubt it is in the pay of Hindenburg.

Dr. Murry also apparently appears as author of the preface to "*The Dove's Nest and Other Stories*," by the late Katherine Mansfield (*Knopf*), though his name is not signed to it. His view of the talents of this lady, I fear, has been somewhat conditioned by the fact that she was his wife; I suspect that much of the other praise that is falling upon her work owes at least part of its inspiration to her very charming personality and her pathetic and premature death. Certainly it is difficult for an unsentimental reviewer, three thousand miles away, to find any of the profound and subtle merits in it that are now so eloquently talked of. Her stories, in fact, are the reverse of profound; they skate over the surface, and seldom penetrate to the fundamental motives of her characters. Consider, for example, "*The Doll's House*," which opens the present volume. How can one imagine any civilized woman being so brutally cruel as Mrs. Aunt Beryl is? Her shocking conduct in the last scene of the story is simply nonsensical—a piece of unconvincing play-acting. A King Kleagle's wife in Georgia would never treat the blackest pickaninny (even assuming him to be Roman Catholic and



Jewish to boot) as Aunt Beryl treats the forlorn little Kelveys. I refuse to believe that any such female monster exists in England, or anywhere else in Christendom. Yet we are asked to accept this impossible tale gravely as the product of "a talent now generally recognized as among the rarest of her generation." Such praise is simply nonsense. Miss Mansfield wrote with great charm, and had a delicate and whimsical humor, but she lacked the penetrating sagacity that must go into genuinely first-rate short stories. Put her best work—for example, the fragment called "The Dove's Nest"—beside such a thing as Miss Cather's "Paul's Case," or Mrs. Winslow's "Mamie Carpenter," or Sherwood Anderson's "I Am a Fool," or Miss Suckow's "A Pilgrim and a Stranger," and at once its lack of substance begins to be manifest. There are, indeed, at least a dozen women in America who do better work. To maintain the contrary may be amiable and polite, but it is nevertheless grossly false.

### III

"CRUCIBLES of Crime," by Joseph F. Fishman, for many years inspector of prisons for the Department of Justice (*Cosmopolis*), bears the subtitle of "The Shocking Story of the American Jail," and is given over to hair-raising descriptions of the medieval dungeons discovered by the author in his inspections of American city and county jails. Most of the prisoners confined in jail in the Republic, as everyone knows, have not been found guilty of any crime; they are simply held there to await their trials or the convenience of the *Polizei*, and according to the theory of the law they are as pure and virtuous as you or I. Nevertheless, in nine American jails out of ten, they are half starved, immersed in filth, and treated otherwise with almost fabulous barbarity. Prison reform, it appears, has not yet reached the jails. The great prisons of the land, or many of them, are now so humanely conducted that they resem-

ble Y. M. C. A.'s; if only the convict can stand the attentions of the penologists who infest the premises, trying to reform him, he is sure to have all the comforts of a profiteer in the Union League Club, with a radio outfit, cheap chewing tobacco, and maybe an occasional shot of cocaine thrown in. But the jails are still mere cesspools. Nobody seems to bother about them; nobody, save Mr. Fishman, seems even to visit them. Many a proud citizen of this great Free State, perhaps declared innocent by a jury of his peers in the end, has to roost in a dark, damp, ferociously smelly cell for three, four or six months, with Mexicans, Bolsheviks, Seventh Day Adventists, lue-tics, pederasts and even worse riffraff for roommates. Worse, mere boys are thrown into such jails and held there for months, to emerge, as Mr. Fishman says, as accomplished pickpockets, yeggmen and Prohibition enforcement agents. A few good jails exist, true enough, but not many. In the middle of a Gopher Prairie where every adult reads the *Saturday Evening Post*, and belongs to the Maccabees, and contributes to a community chest, there are hell-holes so vile that even tramp poets blanch at the thought of them. They are scattered everywhere. Not a state is without them. And some of the worst are in great and puissant cities, with Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs, Lions Clubs, Advertising Clubs, and every other great agency for the uplift of mankind.

Mr. Fishman proposes that the scandal be abated by setting up receiving prisons in all of the states, wherein persons accused of crime may be sorted out, and the actual criminals separated permanently from those who have got into jail by sheer bad luck. He also proposes that most of the small county jails be abolished altogether, and larger jails be established to house the prisoners of whole judicial districts. Yet again, he proposes that work be provided for all prisoners, to mitigate the boredom of their life. Three good proposals, but I doubt that any of them



goes to the root of the matter. There is absolutely no reason, even under the present system, why jails should be such abominations. That they are what they are is due to somebody's neglect of his plain duties, and that somebody, I believe, is usually the county judge. If this Dogberry would only ease himself down from the bench now and then and visit the sewer to which he so recklessly confines men, women and children, there would be an immediate improvement. He already has all the authority he needs. He may order a jail cleaned whenever the spirit moves him; he may order better food for the prisoners; he may even order a jail closed. And if his orders are not obeyed, he may instruct the county grand jury to indict the offending jailer. Does he ever do it? Not often. Of all classes of public functionaries now in practise in America the county judges are probably the most incompetent, neglectful and vicious. Most of them are such bad lawyers that they know little more about the law than a policeman, and very few of them show any sign of professional conscience. Things would go better all over rural America if one of them were taken from the bench and hanged now and then. Practically all the improvements ever made in English law, now the admiration of the world, were made by hanging judges. I marvel, in all seriousness, that the scheme has never been tried in this country. The news that one jitney John Marshall had been stretched in Iowa, Alabama or Vermont would quickly percolate to the remotest reaches of the nation, and instantly every other county judge would sober up, take a precautionary peep into Blackstone, and begin to pay some heed to the duties he is paid to discharge. I offer the suggestion to the Ku Klux Klan, the American Legion, and all other such agencies of extra-legal justice. Let them give it prayerful consideration.

## IV

## Brief Notices

- THE MARNE MIRACLE, by Col. William K. Naylor (*U. S. Infantry Association*)—The former director of the General Staff School at Washington argues that the Battle of the Marne, September 9, 1914, "seems to have been gained because of Divine intervention." An interesting contribution to American theology.
- THE LOVE-ROGUE, transmuted from the Spanish of Tirso de Molina by Harry Kemp (*Lieber & Lewis*)—This vast poetic drama stumps me. I can read Kemp, but his transmutations from foreign tongues are unfortunately beyond me.
- SOLOMON IN ALL HIS GLORY, by Robert Lynd (*Putnam*)—Amiable, platitudinous, *legato* essays of the English *causerie* variety. In the whole book I can't find a single idea.
- THE GENIUS OF AMERICA, by Stuart P. Sherman (*Scribner*)—A powerful argument for American idealism—i.e., for the political, aesthetic and theological superstitions of small-town Methodists—by a 100 per cent American critic.
- THE LITERARY DISCIPLINE, by John Erskine (*Duffield*)—Another by another.
- THE REAL STORY OF A BOOTLEGGER, by some unknown hand (*Liveright*)—An instructive and original work. This bootlegger, having amassed a million by the practise of his humane art, has now retired from the service and apparently devotes himself to meditation. His discussion of the future of Prohibition seems very sound. He believes (a) that it will never be formally abandoned, and (b) that it will never be actually enforced.
- MUMBO JUMBO, by Henry Clews, Jr. (*Liveright*)—An essay, in the form of a preface and a play, on the character and duties of a gentleman, by a retired New York stockbroker who supports precept with practise on the first page of his book by boasting publicly that his wife is beautiful.
- THE PARLOR PROVOCATEUR, OR FROM SALON TO SOAP-BOX, by Mary Craig Sinclair (*Published by the author*)—A sympathetic account of the lamentable activities of Mrs. Kate Crane Gartz, the wealthy Los Angeles foe to 100 per cent Americanism. But shouldn't *provocateur* be *provocateur*?
- TENNYSON, by Harold Nicolson (*Houghton*)—The first intelligent and informative account of the Poet Laureate. It shows, in its manner, the influence of Lytton Strachey, and in its fundamental thinking that of Van Wyck Brooks. I shall review it at length later on.



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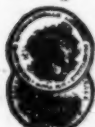
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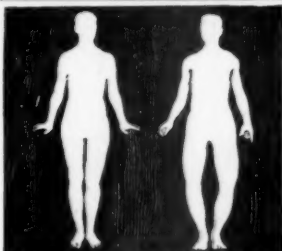


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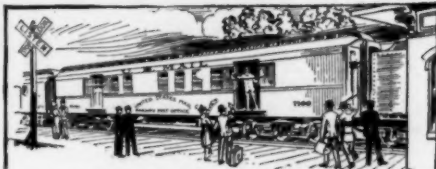
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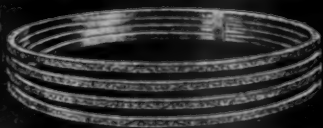
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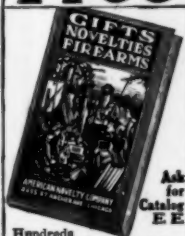


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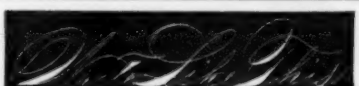


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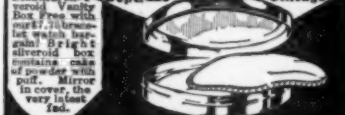
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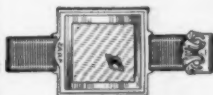
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ZARA No. 100. The Wrist Vanity. Specify what finish you desire for either one you order



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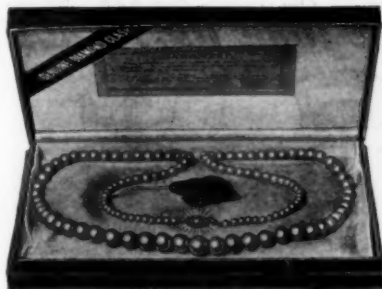
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DECEMBER, 1923



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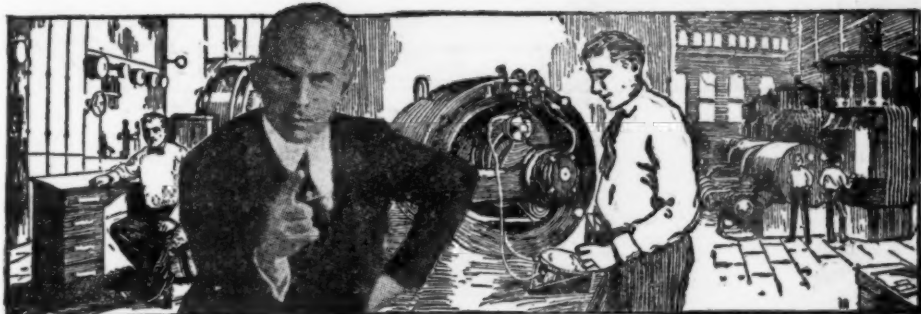
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# Pills Never Made Muscles

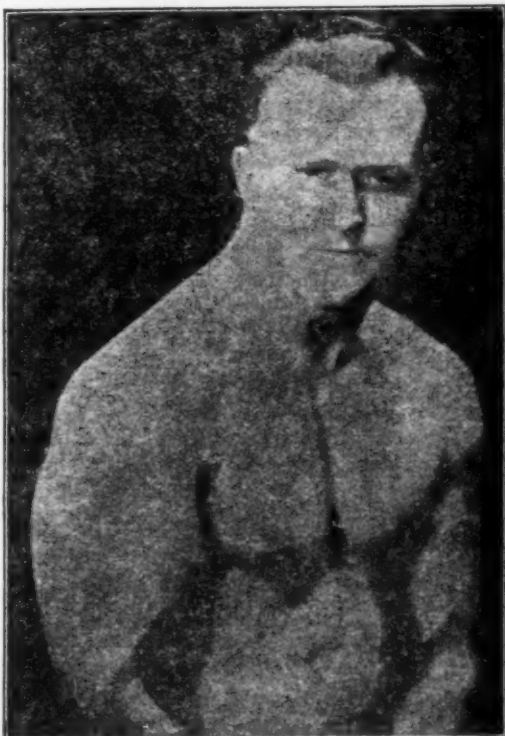
## Wishing Never Brought Strength

NO one can paste muscles onto your arms and shoulders. If you wish a strong, healthy body, you must work for it. And if you don't have one, you are doomed to a life of misery.

Modern science has taught us that we must keep our bodies physically fit or our mental powers will soon exhaust themselves. That is why the successful business man resorts to golf and other active pastimes.

## Examine Yourself

Do you have the strong, robust body which keeps you *fit* at all times to tackle the daily tasks confronting you—always looking for bigger things to do? Do you jump out of bed in the morning full of pep; with a keen appetite and a longing to enter the day's activities? Do you finish your daily tasks still thrilling with pep and vitality? Or do you arise only half awake and go through a languid day?



EARLE E. LIEDERMAN as he is today

## PEP UP!

Don't let it get you, fellows. Come on out of that shell and make a real *he* man of yourself. Build out those skinny arms and that flat chest. Let me put some real pep in your old backbone and put an armor plate of muscle on you that will make you actually thrill with ambition. I can do it. I guarantee to do it. I will put one full inch on your arm in just 30 days and from then on, just watch 'em grow. This is no idle boast. It's the real works. A genuine guarantee. Come on now. Get on the job and make me prove it.

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# Finding 'The Fountain of Youth'

*A Long-Sought Secret, Vital to Happiness, Has Been Discovered.*

**By H. M. Stunz**

*Alas! that spring should vanish with the rose!  
That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!*

—OMAR KHAYYAM.



A SECRET vital to human happiness has been discovered. An ancient problem which, sooner or later, affects the welfare of virtually every man and woman, has been solved. As this problem undoubtedly will come to you eventually, I urge you to read this article carefully. It may give you information of a value beyond all price.

This newly revealed secret is not a new "philosophy" of financial success. It has to do with something of far greater moment to the individual—success and happiness in love and marriage—and there is nothing theoretical, imaginative or fantastic about it, because it comes from the coldly exact realms of science and its value has been proved. It "works." And because it does work—surely, speedily and most delightfully—it is one of the most important discoveries made in many years. Thousands already bless it for having rescued them from lives of disappointment and misery.

The peculiar value of this discovery is that it removes physical handicaps which, in the past, have been considered inevitable and irremediable. I refer to the loss of youthful animation and a waning of the vital forces. These difficulties have caused untold unhappiness—failures, shattered romances, mysterious divorces. True happiness does not depend on wealth, position or fame. Primarily, it is a matter of health. Not the inefficient "half-alive" condition which ordinarily passes as "health," but the abundant, magnetic vitality of superb manhood and womanhood.

Unfortunately, this kind of health is rare. Our civilization rapidly depletes the organism and, in a physical sense, old age comes on when life should be at its prime. But this is not a tragedy of our era alone. Ages ago a Persian poet voiced

humanity's immemorial complaint that "spring should vanish with the rose" and the song of youth too soon come to an end. And for centuries before Omar Khayyam wrote his immortal verses, science had searched—and in the centuries that have passed since then has continued to search—without halt, for the fabled "fountain of youth," an infallible method of renewing energy lost or depleted by disease, overwork, worry, excesses or advancing age.

Now the long search has been rewarded. A "fountain of youth" has been found! Science announces unconditionally that youthful vigor can be restored quickly and safely. Lives clouded by weakness can be illuminated by the sunlight of health and joy. Old age, in a sense, can be kept at bay and youth made more glorious than ever. And the discovery which makes these amazing results possible is something any man or woman, young or old, can easily use in the privacy of the home.

The discovery had its origin in famous European laboratories. Brought to America, it was developed into a product that has given most remarkable results in thousands of cases, many of which had defied all other treatments. In scientific circles the discovery has been known and used for several years and has caused unbounded amazement by its quick, harmless, gratifying action. Now, in convenient tablet form, under the name of Korex compound, it is available to the general public.

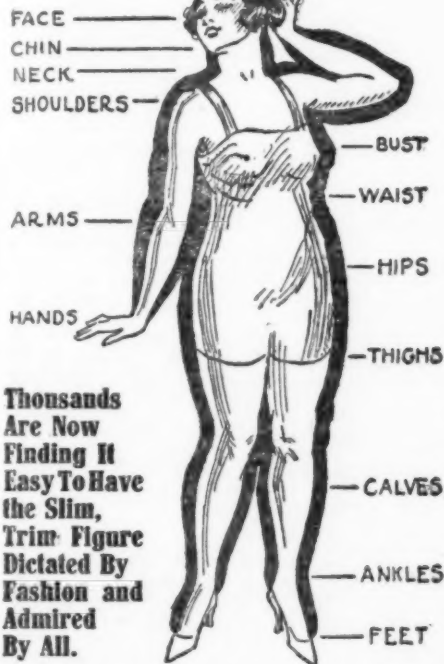
Anyone who finds the youthful stamina ebbing, life losing its charm and color or the feebleness of old age coming on too soon, can obtain a double-strength treatment of this compound under a positive guarantee that it costs nothing if it fails and only \$2 if it produces prompt and gratifying results. In average cases, the compound often brings about amazing benefits in from twenty-four to forty-eight hours.

Simply write in confidence to the Melton Laboratories, 2148 Melton Bldg., Kansas City, Mo., and this wonder restorative will be mailed to you in a plain wrapper. You may enclose \$2 or, if you prefer, just send your name without money and pay the postman \$2 and postage when the parcel is delivered. In either case, if you report within ten days that the Korex compound has not given satisfactory results, your money will be refunded upon request. The Melton Laboratories are nationally known and thoroughly reliable. Moreover, their offer is fully guaranteed, so no one need hesitate to accept it. If you need this remarkable scientific rejuvenator, write for it today.





# Would You Like To Lose a Pound a Day? Then Try This Delightfully Simple Way—



Thousands Are Now Finding It Easy To Have the Slim, Trim Figure Dictated By Fashion and Admired By All.

ARE you fat? You shouldn't be. Without rigorous dieting or exercise—by a simple natural process—you should quickly and easily be able to have the slender fashionable figure that is so attractive.

Scientists have discovered that excess fat is often caused by the subnormal action of a small gland. Once this gland is healthy and functioning properly, your weight should reduce naturally and without effort on your part, to the normal amount for your height.

And science has discovered a simple extract which tends to regulate the gland that controls fat. Without lifting a hand in unnecessary and violent exercise, you should find it a delightfully simple matter to have the ideal, slender figure admired by everyone.

The wonderful thing about the scientific formula known as Rid-O-Fat is that in losing your superfluous fat you should gain added vigor, health and energy of mind and body.

## Feel Young—Look Young

There is nothing which adds to a person's age so much as fat. A few extra pounds makes any man or woman look from five to ten years older. Not only that, the excess weight and increased heart action saps vitality and energy.

Once the gland which controls your fat is functioning properly your food should be turned into firm, solid flesh and muscle. As your weight comes down to normal you should experience a delightful and amazing improvement in your appearance. You should not only feel and look younger—you should actually be younger. You should also be in better health—a real health of energy—not the fictitious and deceiving health of fat that insurance companies say shortens the life ten years.

Complexion, health and figure are improved at the same time. The result is new vitality, magnetism and personal charm that makes for success. Tasks once hard become easy and life worth while.

Science Discloses Method of Quickly Reducing Excess Weight—Many Losing a Pound a Day Without Starvation Dieting or Exercise—Greatly Improves Appearance. Generous Sample Sent Free.

## Quick Results—No Exercise—No Starvation Dieting.

Rid-O-Fat, the scientific compound, comes in convenient tablet form, and is practically tasteless. You simply take one at each meal and bedtime. Results often surprising in their rapidity.

Within a few days you should be conscious of a new feeling of energy and lightness, taking the place of that tired, worn-out feeling.

Quickly as the fat gland resumes normal functioning you should lose weight in a healthy, normal manner. Many fat, ungainly figures are in this scientific manner helped to regain their normal and idealistic proportions, giving that fashionable slenderness and athletic poise.

And all this time you live as you please.

Nature is doing the work. No more irksome exercise—no more denying yourself of all the things you like. Take just one small, pleasant, Rid-O-Fat tablet after each meal. Could anything be more simple?

## Rid-O-Fat Used By 100,000 People

Since the announcement of the wonderful Rid-O-Fat formula it has been used by more than 100,000 people. Twenty to thirty thousand more people are writing for it every month. The following letters show what users think of the scientific Rid-O-Fat system of fat reduction:

### Lost Forty-One Pounds in Thirty Days

"When I wrote for your Rid-O-Fat sample I weighed 245 pounds. Today, which is 30 days later, I weighed only 204 pounds. A reduction of 41 pounds in a month. I am delighted. Please send me another 30-day treatment, as I want to reduce to 145 pounds, which is the correct weight for my height. I am sure that I will realize my ambition with Rid-O-Fat and I feel better than I have in years."

### Lost Twenty Pounds in Three Weeks

"According to weight tables I weighed exactly 20 pounds too much. Rid-O-Fat reduced me to normal in just a little more than three weeks. I feel better, don't get tired, and my friends say I look like a new person."

## Generous Sample FREE

I want every fat person to have a chance to try Rid-O-Fat in their own homes at my expense. I don't want them to take my word or that of the thousands who have used it. I want them to see for themselves that the results are more pleasing than anything I can say. To introduce Rid-O-Fat in a million more homes I will send a free sample to anyone who will write for it. In fact it is really more than a sample, as it is sufficient to reduce the average person several pounds. I will also send with the sample an interesting booklet that explains the scientific reason for fat, and why Rid-O-Fat meets with the highest approval.

**Costs Nothing!** Don't send a penny—I will send the sample and the booklet under plain wrapper and fully postpaid. This does not obligate you in any way and is never to cost you a cent. It is simply a limited offer I am making to more generally introduce Rid-O-Fat.

This free offer is good for only a short time, so send me your name and address on the coupon below or a post card, and I will see that the generous sample and booklet are mailed immediately under plain wrapper postpaid. Do not try to get Rid-O-Fat at drug stores as it is distributed only direct from my laboratory to you—remember this is a short time offer and send your name at once. H. C. HAIST, Whinton Laboratories, 1504 Coca Cola Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

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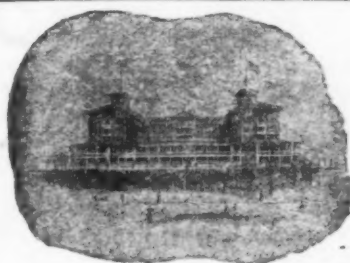
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### Are You Ever "Alone" in a Crowd?

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## ANNOUNCEMENT

that which it has offered in the last decade. While an attempt will be made to reach the present high standard, a further attempt will be made at distinctiveness. The magazine will not confine itself to any particular species of fiction, but will include the very best stories, regardless of theme, that it can obtain—mystery, romance—the services of some of the American public's favorite authors, and the entire range of human experience in the fiction form.

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# The Poseur

[A Complete Short Novel]

By F. Hugh Herbert

[Author of "Pilgrimage," Etc.]

## I

WHEN Peter Dunn was less than ten years old he wrote a poem called "The Anarchist's Death."

It was a mechanically perfect verse on a ludicrously macabre theme and, for a small boy, was really quite good. Mr. Dunn, who was perhaps a little prouder than the average parent, had it typed, with numerous carbon copies, and showed it to all his friends, who patted Peter on the head and said:

"So you're going to be a poet, are you?"

To which Peter, blushing profusely, replied diffidently, "Oh, well—I don't know—"

But inwardly he thought the poem wonderful. It staggered him to think that he had actually written a poem entitled "The Anarchist's Death." Twenty times a day he looked furtively at the neatly typewritten sheet, and particularly at the line "By Peter Adolph Dunn." He was not a little awed by the possibility that he might perhaps be a genius.

The Duns lived just outside London, in the shadow of the Crystal Palace, and much of Peter's childhood had been spent in and about that depressing edifice. Peter, like most schoolboys who lived in its vicinity, had a season ticket to the Palace, of which he made full use.

He would wander by the hour along its musty corridors, and idle away his time among the booths where cigarettes and chocolates could be purchased.

The grounds, too, were full of interest with their vast reproductions of prehistoric monsters. Here Peter found the inspiration for "The Anarchist's Death." He had scribbled it in a penny notebook while perched on the hideous head of an ichthyosaurus.

Peter was a delicate child, and seemed to be perpetually convalescent from some ailment or other. He was dark, inclined to be fat, and very small for his age. He was very nervous, and would start violently when addressed unexpectedly. He was always twisting his hands about, or scratching himself, and one of his earliest recollections was of a voice—a vague generic voice that belonged to a succession of nursemaids and governesses—a voice saying continually and monotonously:

"Peter, *don't* fidget with your hands."

Then for several minutes Peter would try to stop fidgeting, and put his hands in his pockets, and then the voice would change its plea to a very clearly emphasized:

"Peter, *take* your hands out of your pockets. . . ."

Governesses divide children roughly into two classes. Some are "pets" and the others are "trials." They all thought Peter was a pet when they first saw him. He had a very winning smile, and many pretty ways. He jumped up to open doors, and tried in every respect to live up to his mother's notion of what a little gentleman should be. But in the end they all found him a trial.

Peter indulged in moods. At the age